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A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF THE  
DESCRIPTIVE TECHNIQUE OF JEAN-  
JACQUES ROUSSEAU



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A Contribution to the Study of the  
Descriptive Technique of Jean-  
Jacques Rousseau

BY

MARGARET LOUISE BUCHNER

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TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY FATHER





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## FOREWORD

This study of the descriptive technique of Jean-Jacques Rousseau was undertaken at the suggestion of Professor Gilbert Chinard and the late Professor David Blondheim. I wish to express my appreciation for their interest and counsel; Dr. Chinard was particularly kind in helping me bring it to a conclusion. I wish further to express my thanks to those professors of the Romance faculty of The Johns Hopkins University who offered constructive advice and criticism in the preparation of this manuscript for the press during the winter of 1936-37, Dr. Leo Spitzer and Dr. Émile Malakis. Also, for invaluable assistance in reading proof, I am indebted to both my Mother and Professor H. Carrington Lancaster.



## INTRODUCTION

Jean-Jacques Rousseau has been the subject for the observations of so many students, admirers and critics, that a fresh attempt to evaluate certain of his stylistic traits may seem, at first glance, to call for some justification. Rousseau the man, the sentimental novelist, the pedagogue, the musician, the *philosophe*, the religious thinker, the theorist in scientific and political problems, the lover of nature, each of these aspects of this many-sided personality has had its share of scholarly consideration and appraisal. It is my desire to add in some small way to the picture which we have been able to construct concerning him as an individual and as a man of letters.

The proposition in which I am interested relates to one of the most important influences in Rousseau's life and career. I refer to his connection with the *Encyclopédistes*, whose school of materialistic thought made such substantial contributions to the intellectual development of the second half of the XVIIIth century in France. Through his contacts with this group, he became familiar with the keystone of its philosophy and the mainspring of its literary dialectics: the theory of sensationalism as the basis of all human experience.

Man is what he is through his reaction to impulses which strike upon his sensory organs. Just as one's earliest development is influenced by this factor, so is his subsequent outlook upon life and upon his associates indissolubly linked with these primary experiences. Rousseau makes both a theoretical and a practical application of this principle, for he not only recognizes its intellectual validity, but he also appreciates its manifestations in his own career. He is able to observe himself as a subject, as well as to envisage the growth of the ideal personality in a perfect environment, namely, *Emile*.

The rôle of sensations, as they are actually perceived, or as he imagines them in a hypothetical case, thus figure largely in certain phases of Rousseau's writing. Those of his works which first come to mind in this connection are, of course, his *Confessions* and *Emile*. To these should be added their supplements, the *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire* and *Emile et Sophie*, respectively. Still another of his compositions combines both personal

reminiscences and his search for the ideal in human nature: *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. His *Essai sur l'origine des langues* also contributes to the comprehensive survey of his interpretation of the sensationalistic principles, with its treatments of some features on the historic-theoretical side.<sup>1</sup>

These, therefore, constitute the basis of my study, for I am chiefly concerned with the extent to which he applies this principle which plays a major rôle in his life as an individual and as a man of letters. It readily divides itself into two main considerations, namely, his reaction to his environment and to his associates. The first of these quite obviously centers around the world of nature. Here he finds the most congenial atmosphere and the most attractive background for his reflections and musings. The second also has a certain importance, for he is influenced by many of the contacts which he makes in the course of his career.

The passages where these features are most likely to appear are, of course, essentially descriptive, where he paints either the external world as he sees it and as he reacts to it, or the characters and personalities which move through his fictional and autobiographical works. My purpose, then, is to study these selections from the works of Rousseau with a view to noting the frequency of sensory notations in them. The presentation of any phenomenon by means of word-pictures requires, first of all, a certain attention on the part of the observer. Consequently, the search for specific details also makes it possible to ascertain his method of perception as well as of reproduction. This is of special significance, for one paints according to one's impressions.

The indication of these elements alone, however, is not sufficient in itself to account for the animation and appeal of the excerpts with which I shall be concerned in the course of this survey. There are concomitant factors which have their bearing on the situation, for as Rousseau himself remarks, "... les sen-

<sup>1</sup> The text of Rousseau upon which my remarks are based and from which I quote throughout this study is that of the Hachette edition of his complete works, Paris, 1865. The one exception is *La Nouvelle Héloïse*; for this I use the edition of M. Mornet, Paris, 1925, in four volumes. The Roman numerals after a title indicate the volume of either the Hachette or Mornet edition, as the case may be, in which the selection appears.

sations ne sont rien que ce que le coeur les fait être.”<sup>2</sup> I shall therefore also attempt to determine the personal and emotional attitudes underlying his treatment of the subject as a whole.

In the consideration of “nature” as a general concept, one must take care to recognize three distinct methods of approach. The first and most obvious of these relates to the purely physical aspects of the external world. The delineation of a striking or appealing vista, studied precision in the sketch of a flower or of an insect, the observation of the habits of creatures which lead an existence sometimes unknown to the layman, all these details enter into the fundamental application of the term, “description of nature.”

From this point of departure there develops a second attitude, that of considering the impression which they make upon the individual. To note the outstanding features of a scene, a plant, or an insect is one thing; to feel a reaction, whether of interest, curiosity, or wonderment, is another. The second is essentially a personal sentiment of which one is conscious as he looks upon these phenomena. Furthermore, his perception and analysis of this state of mind may lead him to a desire to give it full expression. It is to be noted, however, that indications of the latter point of view do not appear in French literature to the same extent as the former. While the simple notation of picturesque elements in nature dates from the time of the Renaissance, the subjective note is not introduced, to any great degree, until the beginning of the XVIIIth century, reaching its fullest development at the time of the Romantic movement.

This brings us to the third distinction which is to be made in tracing the development of the emphasis which is placed upon nature by successive generations of writers: the interpretation of a landscape in accordance with one's sentiments of the moment. The interplay of the external world and the state of mind of the individual eventually comes to be the focal point of an extensive literary school. One's emotional response to a given scene is conditioned by his particular *état d'âme*.

It is in this last category that Rousseau belongs, for there is a strong personal element which colors his work and determines not only his reactions, but his descriptive technique as well. In this study of his treatment of landscapes and of individuals, I am

<sup>2</sup> *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Mornet ed., Paris, 1925, v. II, p. 56.



particularly interested in his notations of sensory impulses: visual impressions, sounds, odors, and general experiences which are the combination of several of these. The analysis of these elements contributes also to a comprehensive understanding of his methods of observation and reproduction of what he has seen as a whole.

While the personal aspect of nature does not appear to any great extent in the literature subsequent to the Renaissance, there are, nevertheless, certain manifestations of a feeling for the out-of-doors in both the XVIth and the XVIIth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Besides other general treatments of the subject as a whole,<sup>4</sup> there are also numerous studies and investigations on more specific items in the field of landscape descriptions from the period of Old French literature to relatively modern times.<sup>5</sup>

This analysis of Rousseau's technique would seem thus to follow in some measure the survey which has been undertaken along similar lines in other writers. That he had a definite contribution to make in both his observation and portrayal of the external world is no new hypothesis. If the following remarks, which take their departure from the fundamental concept of sensationalism, succeed in some slight measure in shedding fresh light on the nature of this characteristic in one of its chief exponents in French literature, this thesis will have achieved its purpose.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. G. L. McCann, *Le Sentiment de la nature en France dans la première moitié du dix-septième siècle*, Nemours, 1926, where she calls attention particularly to such poets as Théophile de Viau, Saint-Amant, Tristan l'Hermite and Racan. Miss McCann also discusses the reflection of this movement in the novel, in painting and in the general life and society of the decades with which she is concerned. See also R. A. Aubin, "Saint-Amant as 'Preromantic,'" *MLN*, v. 50, 1935, pp. 456-457, where he indicates a distinct expression of this sentiment in this XVIIth century poet.

<sup>4</sup> A. Biese, *Die Entwicklung des Naturgefühls im Mittelalter und der Neuzeit*, Leipzig, 1888. See also A. Dauzat, *Le Sentiment de la nature et son expression artistique*, Paris, 1914. Here the subject is treated primarily from the point of view of aesthetics.

<sup>5</sup> A. Ott, *Étude sur les couleurs en vieux français*, Paris, 1899; S. L. Levensgood, *The Use of Color in the Verse of the Pliade*, Paris, 1927; F. Boillot, "La Fontaine coloriste," *Revue d'histoire littéraire*, v. 28, 1921, pp. 346-360; E. Goddard, "Color in Lamartine's *Jocelyn*," *MLN*, v. 36, 1921, pp. 221-225; L. Mabillean, *Victor Hugo*, Paris, 1893; E. Huguet, *La couleur, la lumière et l'ombre dans les métaphores de Victor Hugo*, Paris, 1905; E. Zyromski, *Lamartine, poète lyrique*, Paris, 1896.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PREDECESSORS OF ROUSSEAU

In undertaking the study of the influence and technique of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, I feel it would perhaps be well briefly to trace the traditional style of writing, with especial regard to the novel, as it appears up to the time of his activity. The *roman* had enjoyed a definite place in literature along with poetry and the drama ever since the Renaissance, and its form, style and subject matter were given a treatment which may serve as a basis for comparison with what develops later in relatively modern times. There is an accepted method in this field just as there is in the other branches of letters, and for our purpose it will perhaps be sufficient to go back to the XVIIth century and trace the characteristics of this *genre* down to the period with which this thesis is concerned.

In the century which precedes Rousseau, one finds what may be termed the classical style of writing. The personalities which appear in such pastoral novels as the *Astrée*, for example, are characterized, one might almost say, by their lack of individuality. That is, they represent general types rather than specific persons. Concerning *Astrée* herself, we learn, for example, that she is a beautiful shepherdess, loved by Celadon whose affection she wishes to test before admitting her feeling for him. She is sweet and attractive, but we never learn much more about the secret springs of her soul in all the several thousands of pages of the story. Celadon plays the part of the hopelessly love-lorn, alternating between hope and despair, joy and tears; naïve and sincere, he eventually receives his reward after having undergone all kinds of trials and adventures. Hylas, in the same work, depicts the cynic, as a type. He is a pseudo-philosopher, a woman-hater, avowedly uninterested in affairs of the heart. He is eventually brought to his knees, of course, but we are given no analysis of just what takes place within him or how the change is wrought.

To consider another type of novel toward the latter part of the century, we find similar generalities of character portrayal

in such a didactic book as *Télémaque*. The hero represents the ideal youth, eager and ready to learn, subject to passing whims and flashes of temper, but always reasonable, contrite and repentant after the slightest display of any sentiment which might appear unseemly. Mentor is the perfect teacher. He is, of course, the goddess Minerva under disguise, so that perhaps one has reason to expect his pedagogy to be without a flaw. All this, however, only serves to maintain the atmosphere of detachment and objectivity through which we see the protagonists of these representative tales of the period.

The background against which these characters move is treated in a corresponding manner. There are only passing references to the setting of the story, outdoor scenes are sketched, but are not drawn in detail. There are few specific notations of a descriptive nature, with little indication of any reaction on the part of the observer.

The *Astrée* opens on the banks of the Lignon, a little stream which winds its way through the plain watered by the larger river, the Loire. This country is presented to us in this manner:

Auprès de l'ancienne ville de Lyon, du costé du soleil couchant, il y a un pays nommé Forests, qui en sa petitesse contient ce qui est de plus rare au reste des Gaules, car estant divisé en plaines et en montagnes, les unes et les autres sont si fertiles, et situées en un air si temperé, que la terre y est capable de tout ce que peut désirer le laboureur. Au coeur du pays est le plus beau de la plaine, ceinte, comme d'une forte muraille, des monts assez voisins et arrosée du fleuve de Loyre, qui prenant sa source assés près de là, passe presque par le milieu, non point encore trop enflé ny orgueilleux, mais doux et paisible. Plusieurs autres ruisseaux en divers lieux le vont baignant de leurs claires ondes, mais l'un des plus beaux est Lignon, qui vagabond en son cours, aussi bien que douteux en sa source, va serpentant par ceste plaine depuis les hautes montagnes de Cervieres et de Chalmasel, jusques à Feurs, où Loire le recevant, . . . l'emporte pour tribut à l'Océan.<sup>1</sup>

In *Télémaque*, we find the goddess Calypso sad and tearful after the departure of Ulysses:

Elle se promenoit souvent seule sur les gazons fleuris dont un printemps éternel bordoit son fle . . .<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. d'Urfé, *L'Astrée*, ed. Vaganay, Lyons, 1925, v. I, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> F. Fénelon, *Télémaque*, ed. Albert Cahen, Paris, 1920, v. I, p. 5.

Her grotto is a cool refuge from the heat of the sun :

. . . des fontaines, coulant avec un doux murmure sur des prés semés d'amarantes et de violettes, formoient en divers lisux des bains aussi purs et aussi clairs que le cristal; mille fleurs naissantes émailloient les tapis verts dont la grotte étoit environnée.\*

From it, one has a sweeping view of the mountains :

On aperçoit de loin des collines et des montagnes qui se perdoient dans les nues et dont la figure bizarre formoit un horizon à souhait pour le plaisir des yeux. Les montagnes voisines étoient couvertes de pampre vert qui pendoit en festons: le raisin, plus éclatant que la pourpre, ne pouvoit se cacher sous les feuilles, et la vigne étoit accablée sous son fruit. Le figuier, l'olivier, le grenadier, et tous les autres arbres couvroient la compagne et en faisoient un grand jardin.<sup>4</sup>

In this last example, we see the beginnings of more specific notations. Colors are indicated, and form is hinted at in *la figure bizarre des montagnes*. There is as yet, however, no expression of a personal reaction to this on the part of Calypso.

This technique of the XVIIth century which admittedly degenerates into a *cliché* is usually considered to be the outstanding feature of the literature of the period. It is a recognized stereotyped style which becomes almost universally adopted. One is apt to think of this age in just these terms, not looking for anything more animated and personal until a century or so later. There is, however, a school of writers who enjoy the use of a full and rich descriptive field, but who, for some reason or another, remain comparatively obscure and unknown to the average reader. These are the travellers who come to America, with its outlying islands, and to other uncharted regions of the world. It is truly a "New World" for them, and some of the more observant of these explorers try to give their impressions of it. There are those bent on purely scientific quests; others whose mission is a more religious one; still others simply of adventurous spirit, seeking novelty and diversion. There are many accounts of these excursions out into "the vast unknown," and they reflect, in many cases, the reaction and feelings of the writer as he witnessed so many strange and marvelous and fearful things.

Somehow these authors and their works have often been left

\* *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

aside in the general survey of literary trends and tendencies prior to the XVIIIth century. They do not escape the attention of one reader, however, namely, Chateaubriand, who ascribes to them a definite rôle in the history of descriptive writing. Going back even farther than these "moderns," he traces what he considers to be the history of the movement. He thinks that it takes its genesis from the rise of Christianity, for in his *Génie du Christianisme* he devotes considerable space to a discussion of this phenomenon.<sup>5</sup>

He thus comes eventually to speak of the travellers and explorers of the XVIIIth century who take full advantage of what he calls *la poésie descriptive*, that accurate and vivid reproduction of the external world which is highly desirable in writers such as these whose task it is to paint for their compatriots sights and experiences which are new and entirely foreign to them.<sup>6</sup>

The cultivation of this talent on their part is limited to the first of the three methods of representing nature which have been indicated in the Introduction to this study. As these men are concerned with the practical problem of depicting for their reader something which is completely unknown to him, they must make a special effort to be accurate, picturesque and striking. There appears little or no attempt to give an aesthetic or emotional interpretation of the scenes which they witness.

The greatest handicap under which these naturalist-missionary-scientists struggle is a faulty and inadequate vocabulary. Realizing their predicament, Chateaubriand has nothing but praise for their efficient and effective handling of words. His favorite author in this respect is le Père Dutertre; it is in the section on the Missions in the Antilles that he calls attention repeatedly to the descriptive ability of this adventurer.

Quant à l'histoire naturelle, le Père Dutertre vous montre quelquefois tout un animal d'un seul trait; il appelle l'oiseau-mouche *une fleur céleste*; c'est le vers du Père Commire sur le papillon:

'Florem putares nare per liquidum aethera.'<sup>7</sup>

He has as vivid a palette as any of those writers who later cultivate a similar style.

<sup>5</sup> F.-R. Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme*, 2<sup>e</sup> Partie, l. IV, ch. III, *Oeuvres*, ed. Lavocat, Paris, 1826, v. XII, pp. 177-183.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 2<sup>e</sup> Partie, l. IV, ch. I, note D, p. 373.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 4<sup>e</sup> Partie, l. IV, ch. VII, *Oeuvres*, v. XIV, p. 61.

'Les plumes du flambant ou du flamant, . . . sont de couleur incarnat: et, quand il vole à l'opposite du soleil, il paroît tout flamboyant comme un brandon de feu.'

His gift of painting is admirably illustrated in the picture he sketches of the curious birds he has observed. Chateaubriand takes pleasure in ranking him as an equal of Buffon whose specialty and profession call for the cultivation of a similarly graphic and brilliant style.

Buffon n'a pas mieux peint le vol d'un oiseau, que l'historien des Antilles: 'Cet oiseau (*la frégate*) a beaucoup de peine à se lever de dessus les branches: mais quand il a une fois pris son vol, on lui voit fendre l'air d'un vol paisible, tenant ses ailes étendues sans presque les remuer, ni se fatiguer aucunement. Si quelquefois la pesanteur de la pluie, ou l'impétuosité des vents l'importune, pour lors il brave les nues, se guinde dans la moyenne région de l'air, et se dérobe à la vue des hommes.'

Chateaubriand finds his account of the humming-bird building her nest a touching little picture of home-making among birds.

'Elle carde, s'il faut ainsi dire, tout le coton que lui apporte le mâle, et le remue quasi poil à poil avec son bec et ses petits pieds; puis elle forme son nid, qui n'est pas plus grand que la moitié de la coque d'un oeuf de pigeon. A mesure qu'elle élève le petit édifice, elle fait mille petits tours, polissant avec sa gorge la bordure du nid, et le dedans avec sa queue.

' . . . Je n'ai jamais pu remarquer en quoi consiste la becquée que la mère leur apporte, sinon qu'elle leur donne la langue à sucer, que je crois être tout emmiellée du suc qu'elle tire des fleurs.'<sup>10</sup>

Surely we have here the essence of picturesque yet faithful reproduction of natural phenomena. Later generations of writers have shown equal skill in this style, but none, in Chateaubriand's estimation, has ever really surpassed this observing student of nature.

Si la perfection dans l'art de peindre consiste à donner une idée précise des objets, en les offrant toutefois sous un jour agréable, le missionnaire des Antilles a atteint cette perfection.<sup>11</sup>

This is simple but genuine praise and to judge from the excerpts given, one has every reason to feel as does Chateaubriand

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

that here indeed is an expression of the vivid and colorful which must be given due consideration in any serious study of this aspect of French literary history.

Le Père Dutertre and Tournefort are but two of the host of these XVIIIth-century travellers who have left accounts of their expeditions to new and strange parts of the world. A complete, or even a superficial study of them all cannot be gone into here, but general surveys of this particular field can at least be indicated as helpful for a more thorough analysis of these tendencies. The works of Professor Chinard, *L'Exotisme américain dans la littérature française au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1911), and *L'Amérique et le rêve exotique dans la littérature française au XVII<sup>e</sup> et au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1913), pass in review a great number of the men who have made generous contributions to this field of letters. It is perhaps sufficient for us simply to note the interest in this field which is concurrent with the "traditional" XVIIIth century style, to show that its reappearance in the post-Rousseau period is the continuation of a movement of long years' standing.

That there is manifest a certain *sentiment de la nature* in French letters prior to the XVIIIth century has been indicated frequently enough to need no further discussion here. As additional evidence on the question, however, I quote one or two selections from l'abbé Bouhours, which date from 1691. These are descriptions of the sea of a brilliance representative of the literary expression of a century later. Notations of colors, sound, motion and even moods of the waves are vivid and convincing. While l'abbé Bouhours does not rank among the leading writers of his generation, these passages are a contribution to that field with which I am most directly concerned.

A ce que je voy, dit Eugène, vous y trouvez [dans la mer] quelque chose de bien merveilleux. Ouy sans doute, reprit Ariste. Cette immense étendue d'eaux; ce flux & ce reflux, le bruit, la couleur, les figures différentes de ces flots qui se poussent régulièrement les uns sur les autres, ont je ne sçay quoi de si surprenant et de si étrange, que je ne sçache rien qui en approche . . . [la mer] paroît toujours nouvelle, parce qu'elle n'est jamais en un même état. Tantôt elle est tout-à-fait tranquille, & ses ondes sont si unies qu'on la prendroit pour une eau dormante: tantôt elle est un peu émué, . . . Il y a des heures qu'elle est étranquement agitée. Elle est haute en un temps & basse en un autre. Quelquefois elle s'avance, & quelquefois elle se retire. Elle change de couleur

presqu'à tous momens: après une grande agitation elle est toute blanche d'écume: quand le soleil se lève ou se couche, il semble qu'elle soit tout en feu. Tantôt elle paroît de couleur de pourpre; tantôt elle paroît verte ou bleuë. Ces couleurs différentes se meslent quelquefois ensemble, & ce mélange fait une peinture naturelle, que l'art ne peut imiter. Le bruit de ses flots n'est quelquefois qu'un doux murmure, qui invite à rever agréablement; mais c'est aussi quelquefois un mugissement épouvantable, qu'on ne peut ouïr sans frayeur.<sup>12</sup>

Ariste and Eugène continue their discussion with some observations on the different moods of the sea.

. . . la mer [dit Eugène] n'est jamais si belle que dans sa colère; lorsqu'elle s'enfle, qu'elle s'agite, qu'elle mugit d'une manière effroyable, & qu'il se fait une espèce de guerre entre les vents et les flots. Ces vagues qui s'entrechoquent avec tant d'impétuosité, ces montagnes d'eau et décume [sic] qui s'élèvent & qui s'abaissent tout d'un coup; ce bruit, ce désordre, ce fracas, tout cela inspire je ne sçay quelle horreur accompagnée de plaisir, & fait un spectacle également terrible et agréable.<sup>13</sup>

That sentiment of the "undefinable something," which, as we shall see, plays such an important rôle in Rousseau's reaction to nature finds a definite and unmistakable expression here. This type of description is unusual for this period, however, for the technique as a whole undergoes further transformations before Rousseau begins to write.

In the early XVIIIth century, there becomes manifest a slightly different style in the painting of landscapes. In his enumeration of the various details of a scene, the writer begins to express a certain aesthetic pleasure as he contemplates an orderly site; he likes to see it well-planned and symmetrical. This still remains an objective standard of judgment, for he does not yet give much evidence of any personal reaction to what lies spread out before him. It is sufficient for him to see a neat display of fields or city streets; the artistry of careful arrangement appeals to him, but he evidently is not inspired to reveal any emotion or feeling which is aroused in him at the sight of it. He continues to remain largely outside of the picture, just as he has done heretofore.

This shift of attitude and emphasis becomes evident in the works of theorists as well as in creative writers. One has only

<sup>12</sup> D. Bouhours, *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, Amsterdam, 1691, pp. 3-4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.



to consider the Earl of Shaftesbury to realize the importance of these considerations in both his ethical and aesthetic principles. In his *Characteristicks* (1711) and *Second Characters* (1712), he analyses what he considers as the beautiful, identifying it with the true and the good.

. . . what is Beautiful is *Harmonious and Proportionable*: what is Harmonious and Proportionable, is True: and what is at once both *Beautiful and True*, is, of consequence, *Agreeable and Good*.<sup>14</sup>

The essence of all beauty reposes in what he designates as Art and Design and not in Matter.<sup>15</sup> The material of which an article or object is constituted is, in itself, not beautiful; it is made so only in the manner and degree to which it is fashioned and molded. Also, the full appreciation of such creations presupposes a certain mental alertness and perspicacity on the part of the beholder.

If Brutes . . . be incapable of knowing and enjoying Beauty, as being *Brutes*, and having Sense only (the brutish part) for their own share: it follows, 'That neither can Man by the same *Sense* or brutish Part, conceive or enjoy Beauty: But all the *Beauty and Good* he enjoys, is in a nobler way, and by the help of what is noblest, his Mind and Reason.'<sup>16</sup>

Since beauty lies not so much within the realm of the material itself as in the treatment which it receives at the hands of the artist, the latter must work according to some definite plan. Without a proper arrangement of the elements present, there would be no way of determining their full import. Consequently, there must exist a fundamental symmetry and balance between corresponding parts. This idea, of course, is not original with Shaftesbury, since it is the classical ideal which dates from the time of the Greeks. In his *Second Characters*, Shaftesbury makes an application of what he had already discussed at some length in his *Characteristicks*. The former show

. . . the Greek conception that harmony and proportion are the ultimate foundations alike of beauty and morality . . .<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A. Shaftesbury, Earl of, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. Fourth edition, Dublin, 1743, v. III, pp. 182-183; cf. also v. II, p. 399.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, v. III, pp. 404-405.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, v. II, pp. 424-425.

<sup>17</sup> Shaftesbury, *Second Characters or the Language of Forms*, ed. B. Rand, Cambridge, 1914, p. xxiv.

As a matter of fact, his first concern is with problems of ethics, out of which grow his aesthetic principles.

The counterpart of 'First Characters' is to be found in 'Second Characters.' The former is speculative, the latter practical.<sup>18</sup>

His deductions in both fields may be reduced to a common standard.

Now if in the way of polite Pleasure, the *Study* and *Love of Beauty* be essential; the *Study* and *Love of Symmetry* and *Order*, on which *Beauty* depends, must also be essential, in the same respect.<sup>19</sup>

This cannot be done

. . . without acknowledging that the proportionate and regular State, is the truly *prosperous* and natural in every Subject.<sup>20</sup>

This criterion is universal in its application.

Thus *Beauty* and *Truth* are plainly join'd with the Notion of *Utility* and *Convenience*, . . .

in all branches of the arts, both liberal and scientific.<sup>21</sup> The validity of this statement is discernible in the consideration of a painting, a scene in the open country, or intangible ethical and moral values.

In his *Hercules of Prodicus* Shaftesbury brings this out once more.<sup>22</sup> In this particular instance, he is discussing in detail a situation which may be represented pictorially in several different ways. The generalisations which he makes concerning Beauty as it is to be depicted under these circumstances, however, also hold true for landscapes and rules of conduct as well.

The essentials of any artistic expression are simplicity and unity.<sup>23</sup> Without these one cannot possibly avoid faulty coördination and subordination. This, in turn, disrupts its order, and hence its beauty.

The multiplication of subjects, . . . renders the subordination more difficult to execute in the . . . composition of a work. And if the subordi-

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Characteristicks*, v. III, p. 180.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>22</sup> "A Notion of the Historical Draught of Hercules," *Second Characters*, p. 30 ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

nation be not perfect, the order (which makes the beauty) remains imperfect.<sup>24</sup>

In French letters, perhaps one of the first writers who develop this technique is l'abbé Prévost. He readily concedes, moreover, that his interests center chiefly around man, around the human element in his story, rather than around its background. At the beginning of the sixth book of his *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*, he says,

Je laisse aux géographes et à ceux qui ne voyagent que par curiosité, le soin de donner au public la description des pays qu'ils ont parcourus. L'histoire que j'écris n'est composée que d'actions et de sentiments. J'entreprends de rapporter ce que j'ai fait, et non ce que j'ai vu . . .<sup>25</sup>

Upon other occasions, however, l'abbé Prévost does give us descriptions of landscapes and other views which readily indicate the pleasure he derives from orderly, well-arranged sites. In the *Histoire de M. Cleveland*, book XIV, we find this:

Dans cet intervalle, j'avois eu le temps d'observer que le lieu où j'étois avoit beaucoup de ressemblance avec nos villes. Les maisons étoient de brique, les rues percées avec méthode; et quoique cette petite place ne servit de séjour qu'aux gardes du mur, elle ne manquait ni de propreté, ni d'agrément.<sup>26</sup>

In the same volume we read:

Un jour qu'ayant traversé une plaine vaste et stérile, je cherchois un asile pour la nuit, je découvris entre deux montagnes, qui terminoient l'horizon, un mur fort élevé, dont le sommet étoit encore surpassé par le feuillage d'un grand nombre d'arbres. En le suivant des yeux, j'observois qu'il s'étendoit d'une montagne à l'autre, et qu'il paroisoit servir à éboucher la gorge qui laissoit naturellement un passage dans la plaine.<sup>27</sup>

There are several other fairly detailed sketches of cities in the works of l'abbé Prévost. For example, he has a great deal to say about London and the Thames in the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité*. In book X, he gives the approach to this large and busy center:

Nous nous occupâmes peu de tout ce qui s'offrit sur notre route jusqu'à Gravesend, où nous quittâmes la poste pour nous embarquer sur la

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>25</sup> L'abbé Prévost, *Oeuvres choisies*, ed. Leblanc, v. I, p. 351.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 7, pp. 128-129.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 7, p. 125.

Tamise. Mais notre indifférence fut obligée de céder à la magnificence et à la variété des objets qui se présentèrent bientôt à nos yeux. Je n'ai rien vu, dans tous mes voyages, qui approche de la beauté de ce spectacle. La Tamise, depuis Londres jusqu'à la mer, est non seulement une des plus larges rivières de l'Europe, mais une des plus agréables et des plus propres à la navigation. Les plus grands vaisseaux y entrent avec facilité. Elle en est si couverte, pendant l'espace de vingt-cinq milles, qu'il reste à-peine un canal étroit pour le passage de ceux qui arrivent de nouveau. Ses bords sont remplis de magasins, d'arsenaux, et de quantité d'autres édifices qui servent aux usages du commerce et de la navigation. Dans les endroits où la vue peut s'étendre davantage, on aperçoit un grand nombre de belles maisons, répandues de tous côtés dans les plaines ou sur le penchant des collines, des jardins ornés, des villes bien peuplées et bien bâties . . .<sup>28</sup>

He goes on to characterize London as a city :

La plupart des rues sont larges et bien percées . . . Outre les grandes rues, qui traversent la ville de tous côtés, il s'en trouve une infinité de petites qui leur servent de communication. On appelle celles-ci des cours ou des allées. La plupart sont pavées de marbres ou de grandes pierres carrées; de sorte qu'elles sont toujours fort nettes et fort unies.<sup>29</sup>

He compares London with Paris :

Le pont de Londres est bien beau par sa longueur; mais elle ne surpasse pas celle du Pont-Neuf à Paris. Pour sa largeur, elle n'égale point celle du pont Saint-Michel et de nos autres ponts couverts. Il leur est semblable en tout le reste. Les autres beautés de la capitale d'Angleterre consistent dans les édifices publics, tels que les hôpitaux, les églises, les maisons des compagnies de commerce, les collèges des avocats . . . Tous ces bâtiments paroissent l'ouvrage d'un peuple sage et bien réglé . . .<sup>30</sup>

In spite of his alleged indifference to landscapes and cities, l'abbé Prévost gives us the picture of several smaller English towns in addition to that of London. We are taken to "Tumbridge," as he calls it, in the season of the mineral waters for which this center is known. It is but a day's journey from London. He writes,

Le premier coup d'oeil nous en plut infiniment. Ce n'est ni une ville ni un village. C'est une multitude de jolies maisons qui sont répandues sans ordre de côté et d'autre, et qui sont presque toutes séparées quoiqu'à peu d'éloignement. Il y en a de grandes, de petites, de magnifiques, et d'autres qui ne le sont pas. Les unes sont sur le penchant de plusieurs petites collines, les autres dans le fond où est le puits des eaux minérales. La plupart sont sans jardin; quelques-unes en ont de fort propres, avec

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 244 ff.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246 ff.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312 ff.

un bois qui les fournit d'ombre. Il se forme de tout cela un paysage charmant, qui surprend d'autant plus que les abords en sont sauvages et déserts.<sup>21</sup>

One last excerpt from the *Mémoires d'un homme de qualité* shows us the main features of Bristol.

Les rues de Bristol sont belles. Sa grande place, qu'on appelle Queen-square, est magnifique.<sup>22</sup>

Thus it may be seen to what extent the author of this period is concerned with depicting the background against which his characters move. Although there is a definite growth of interest in this field, it would seem that there is as yet no attempt to interpret the psychological or emotional effect of a view upon the observer. This technique develops later as one of the features of the so-called Romantic movement. We find, however, an early indication of this transition to the personal element in a scene which is described in the *Histoire de M. Cleveland*. It is thrown all the more into relief as it appears in a volume which also contains an excellent example of the type of picture with which we are already familiar.

Let us consider the second excerpt first. There is spread out before the observer a fairly large plain surrounded by steep, rocky cliffs.

La vue étoit ainsi bornée de toutes parts. Mais l'univers n'a rien de plus agréable que ce qui s'offrit à mes regards dans ce petit espace. Toute la campagne me parut un jardin enchanté. L'art et la nature sembloient réunis pour l'embellir. C'étoit des allées d'arbres à perte de vue, de petit bois, un mélange bien ordonné de prairies et de terres cultivées, des maisons d'un côté, et de l'autre qui se répondoient avec symétrie, et qui paroisoient aussi bien disposées pour le plaisir des yeux que pour la commodité des habitants. Au milieu de la plaine s'élevoit un vaste édifice. Il n'avoit rien de frappant pour la magnificence; mais il ornoit le paysage, parce qu'il sembloit le centre de toutes les autres maisons qui en étoient à-peu-près au même éloignement. Le soleil, qui commençoit à répandre ses rayons, donnoit un air si riant à toutes les parties de cette belle campagne, que je me crus transporté dans un nouveau monde, . . .<sup>23</sup>

This is a fine illustration of the application of Shaftesbury's principles. First of all, one has the impression of a definitely limited and circumscribed picture since *la vue étoit . . . bornée*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 322-323.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, v. 4, p. 296.

*de toutes parts*. From then on, the author concerns himself with the eminently successful combination of "art and nature" which seem to cooperate in their effort to present a pleasing spectacle. He even uses the terminology of the technician, for his terms are sometimes identical with those of Shaftesbury himself. Compare, for instance, *mélange bien ordonné, des maisons . . . qui se répondoient avec symétrie*; indeed, they give further evidence of careful planning, for their arrangement combines pleasure with utility: *commodité des habitants*. The general atmosphere is also enhanced by the special notation of *le vaste édifice* which serves as the hub of the whole settlement. It seems to be the center from which all the lesser structures are more or less equidistant. Usefulness, harmony, proportion, order; the fundamentals of Shaftesbury's aesthetics are here demonstrated almost as if this passage had been written to that purpose.

In the same volume of the *Histoire de M. Cleveland*, we find, perhaps for the first time at this date, the expression of a sentiment directly inspired by the surrounding landscape. It is at night and two lovers have a rendez-vous.

Nous gagnâmes en un moment la prairie . . . La lune sembloit s'être ornée de toute sa lumière, pour éclairer un spectacle digne de l'attention du ciel et de la terre; et par un effet sans doute de l'extrême satisfaction de mon coeur, qui se répandoit, en quelque sorte, sur toute la nature, l'air ne m'a jamais paru si doux, ni la verdure si riante, que pendant le reste de cette charmante nuit.\*

This is an analysis of the effect of the circumstances on the state of mind of the individual. It is because he is so happy and contented that nature around him seems to reflect a similar mood. He reads into the night the charm and sweetness of his own thoughts; had he been under the influence of some other emotion, he might perhaps have regarded it in another manner.

As the XVIIIth century progresses, there develops an increasing interest in the external world and its reflection upon the individual. A more subjective attitude appears; the writer identifies himself with his surroundings and seeks in them the expression of his own sentiments. He begins to study details, giving some indication of sensory notations of all kinds.

A logical corollary to this is his concern with the play of his

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 355-356.

emotions. A particular site, or a special state of physical being gives rise to certain happy, cheerful, pensive, or melancholy moods. One's outlook is conditioned by his reaction to his *milieu*.

This method of approach eventually attains its height in what is known as the Romantic movement of the beginning of the XIXth century. Of the many personalities who figure in its development, Rousseau, of course, is to be reckoned among the most important and influential. It is the purpose of this thesis to study those elements which constitute his contribution to this field of personal experience and literary expression.

## CHAPTER II

### THE THEORY OF SENSATIONALISM AND ITS AESTHETIC APPLICATIONS

Such a reorientation of the interests, attitude and technique of the writers of the XVIIIth century is occasioned by something more than the mere desire for change or the search for literary novelty. It harks back to the enunciation of a familiar, if neglected, scientific principle which is brought to the fore once again just at the time of Rousseau's migration to Paris. Both specialists and men of letters contribute to the revival and reestablishment of the so-called sensationalistic theory, which lays the foundation of all human development upon the experiences which come to us through external impulses and physical stimuli. L'abbé Condillac, among others, gives this doctrine a fresh impetus with the publication of his *Traité des sensations* (1754) and his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (1746).

Furthermore, this is more than an intellectual abstraction, for it immediately gives rise to a discussion of the aesthetic applications which are inherent in it. Appreciation of the various branches of art is to be enhanced by a consideration of the analogy between color and sound, a parallelism which is sometimes pushed to a fantastic extreme. Diderot, for one, enjoys amusing flights of fancy as he experiments with an ingenious device which is directly inspired through the rediscovery of this age-old concept, namely, *l'orgue des couleurs* of le Père Castel.<sup>1</sup>

It may be well to determine at this point the reason for such a sudden growth of interest in the subject and its implications in our emotional life, and also to explain the extent of Rousseau's connection with this school of thought. That it should come to the fore so decidedly in such a relatively short time is indicative of the introduction of a new and important theory just at the time when Rousseau is beginning his literary career in Paris. From about the middle of the century on, increasing attention is paid to the application of its principles in all phases of our development and behavior. First propounded by the scientists,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 45 ff.



it is subsequently introduced into the realm of literature where it also assumes a capital importance, but with a slightly different emphasis.

The middle of the XVIIIth century marks the reappearance of the sensualistic doctrine as the foundation of all human existence. It is acknowledged as the basic controlling force in our lives. We are what we are because of and through our senses. We are born with no ideas or sentiments inherited from our parents, but are moulded by external stimuli acting upon us from the very beginning. This idea of the *tabula rasa* makes possible and even necessary a definite plan of education and training and marks a reaction against the traditional theory of innate ideas so prevalent up to that time.

It is adopted by many thinkers if not simultaneously, at least within a relatively short time. Locke, among others, is an exponent of the idea in England as is Condillac subsequently in France. In 1746 the latter publishes his *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*, where he discusses "les matériaux de nos connoissances, . . . la distinction de l'âme et du corps, et . . . les sensations, . . ." <sup>2</sup> To accomplish the task he has set himself, he says,

. . . je suis remonté à la perception, parce que c'est la première opération qu'on peut remarquer dans l'âme; et j'ai fait voir comment et dans quel ordre elle produit toutes celles dont nous pouvons acquérir l'exercice.<sup>3</sup>

He expresses a scientific interest in the subject and points out fallacies in the method of procedure of Locke in his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. In 1754, Condillac publishes his famous *Traité des sensations*, another systematic discussion of the subject. Since this work serves as a reference and background for much of the subsequent treatment of the question, echoes of it are to be found everywhere.

Denis Diderot is another who is interested in this theory, although his is not the essentially scientific approach of Condillac. He does consider it, however, at some length, particularly in his *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient*, which dates from 1749, and in his *Lettre sur les sourds et muets à l'usage de ceux qui entendent et qui parlent*, written in 1751.

<sup>2</sup> Condillac, *Oeuvres*, ed. Houel, Paris, 1798, v. I, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

These two *Lettres* consist mainly of a discussion of the various senses, and their relative importance, especially with regard to the individual who is so unfortunate as to be lacking in one or more of them. He conceives of man as a "society" composed of these five units, each functioning in its own way and making its contribution to the formation of a complete personality.<sup>4</sup> His method is to

. . . décomposer, pour ainsi dire, un homme, et de considérer ce qu'il tient de chacun des sens qu'il possède.<sup>5</sup>

He calls this procedure "l'anatomie métaphysique des sens" <sup>6</sup> and he reaches certain conclusions concerning the characteristics of each one of them:

. . . je trouvais que, de tous les sens, l'oeil était le plus superficiel; l'oreille, le plus orgueilleux; l'odorat le plus voluptueux; le goût, le plus substitutif et le plus inconstant; le toucher, le plus profond et le plus philosophe.<sup>7</sup>

Thus he comes to his idea of the make-up of man.

Ce serait, à mon avis, une société plaisante, que celle de cinq personnes dont chacune n'aurait qu'un sens . . . <sup>8</sup>

He goes even further in the analysis of the attributes of each, for

. . . par la faculté qu'elles auraient d'abstraire, elles pourraient toutes être géomètres, s'entendre à merveille, et ne s'entendre qu'en géométrie.<sup>9</sup>

In this manner he admits the possibility of their improvement and defines their mathematical propensities once again later in the same *Lettre*.

Mais la vue, l'odorat et le goût sont capables des mêmes progrès scientifiques [as the other three senses]. Nos sens, distribués en autant d'êtres pensants, pourraient donc s'élever tous aux spéculations les plus sublimes de l'arithmétique et de l'algèbre; sonder les profondeurs de l'analyse; se proposer entre eux les problèmes les plus compliqués sur la nature des équations, et les résoudre comme s'ils étaient des Diophantes . . . Quoi qu'il en soit il s'ensuit que les mathématiques pures entrent dans notre âme par tous les sens, . . . <sup>10</sup>

He also asserts our ability to have several perceptions at once.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> D. Diderot, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Assézat, Paris, 1876, v. I, pp. 353, 399.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 352-353.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 400.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

Not content with these two works dealing directly with the problem, Diderot introduces it once more in his *Apologie de l'abbé de Prades*, of 1752, where he poses as the persecuted abbé supporting his thesis which has been attacked on the grounds of heresy. It is precisely this question of the rôle of the senses and its corollary, materialism, as opposed to the Church doctrine of original sin, moral good and evil, "la loi naturelle," and "la religion surnaturelle" which precipitates the action taken against this advocate of the newer idea. Thus Diderot is masked behind the figure of l'abbé de Prades, but we are able, nevertheless, to disengage his own sentiments from this document of self-defence supposedly written by a member of the clergy.

The examining body calls l'abbé de Prades to task for speaking of man as not much more than a mere animal at the moment of creation. It protests,

On conserve l'expression de l'Ecriture que Dieu répandit un souffle de vie sur son visage (ou lui donna une âme raisonnable); mais on veut après cela qu'il ait été laissé sans connaissances, sans réflexions, sans idées distinctes, à peu près comme une bête brute, un automate, une machine mise en mouvement. Où a-t-on pris l'idée fantastique d'un tel homme? <sup>12</sup>

Through the medium of Diderot, the abbé makes reply:

Dans la nature; oui, monseigneur, je pense très sincèrement, et sans m'en croire moins chrétien, que l'homme n'apporte en naissant ni connaissances, ni réflexions, ni idées. Je suis sûr qu'il resterait comme une bête brute, un automate, une machine en mouvement, si l'usage de ses sens matériels ne mettait en exercice les facultés de son âme. C'est le sentiment de Locke; c'est celui de l'expérience et de la vérité . . . sans les sensations nous n'aurions ni la connaissance de Dieu, ni celle du bien et du mal moral; en un mot, . . . il n'y a aucun principe, soit de spéculation, soit de pratique, inné.<sup>13</sup>

The abbé goes on to reiterate his theory, lamenting the opposition to freedom of thought and basing his conclusions, at least with regard to the subject in question, on his daily observations:

. . . que devons-nous penser aujourd'hui de ceux qui traitent d'impie le vieil axiome, *nil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu* . . .

J'ai montré dans ma thèse, . . . l'homme de tous les jours; je l'ai montré tel que l'expérience me l'a fait connaître, composé de substances essentiellement différentes, mais dont l'une n'exerce ses facultés qu'en

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 450.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

vertu de l'autre; n'acquérant des connaissances que par moyen de ses sens . . .<sup>14</sup>

Another intellectual enemy attacks l'abbé de Prades. It is M. d'Auxerre, who believes in the theory of innate ideas and therefore finds his opponent open to criticism. Diderot makes answer for the man whose cause he is defending. M. d'Auxerre, he says,

prétend que les premières règles de l'équité, de la justice nous sont connues par une lumière intérieure; qu'elles ne sont point acquises, et que nous les apportons en naissant, gravées dans nos cœurs: mais toutes ces prétentions sont renversées par l'axiome, *nihil est in intellectu, quod non prius fuerit in sensu*: axiome qu'il nous sera libre de soutenir jusqu'à ce que quelque autorité supérieure à celle de M. d'Auxerre proscrive et l'expérience et la raison avec lui, ce qui n'arrivera pas si tôt.<sup>15</sup>

Just as there are individual manifestations of the rise of the sensualistic principle, the *Encyclopédie* gives *en gros* the genesis and importance of the doctrine. The *Encyclopédie* is recognized, of course, as the organ of this school of thought, and in it there is to be found considerable discussion of the question from the scientific and philosophical point of view. It would seem, indeed, that there is voiced in one rather extensive passage in the article "Sensation" the "Profession de foi" of the adherents of this new concept. From a study of the purely physiological effect of external stimuli striking our organs, there emerges a development and refinement of analysis which builds up to a dramatic climax in the religious creed into which this theory can be and is here transformed.

There is only one way of acquiring knowledge.

Les seules voies par où les connoissances arrivent dans l'entendement humain, les seuls passages, comme dit Locke, par lesquels la lumière entre dans cette chambre obscure, sont les sens externes et internes.<sup>16</sup>

The "sens externes" are, of course, the five physical senses, while

les sens internes sont les passions, l'attention, l'imagination & la mémoire.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 451.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 471-472.

<sup>16</sup> *Encyclopédie*, art. "Sens internes," t. XV, p. 31 (art. by the Chevalier de Jaucourt).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

If an individual is so unfortunate as to be defective in the functioning of one or more of his senses, his experiences and his background of knowledge are correspondingly limited. This theory does not admit the possibility of any innate or preconceived ideas of any sort. They must all be derived from primary stimuli coming from without.

. . . il est évident que ceux qui sont destitués des organes d'un certain sens, ne peuvent jamais faire que les idées qui appartiennent à ces sens, soient actuellement produites dans leur esprit. C'est une vérité si manifeste, qu'on ne peut la révoquer en doute; & par conséquent, nous ne pouvons douter que ces perceptions ne nous viennent dans l'esprit par les organes de ce sens, & non par aucune autre voie: il est visible que les organes ne les produisent pas; car si cela étoit les yeux d'un homme produiroient des couleurs dans les ténèbres, & son nez sentiroit les roses en hiver. Mais nous ne voyons pas que personne acquiere le goût des *ananas*, avant qu'il aille aux Indes où se trouve cet excellent fruit, & qu'il en goûte actuellement.<sup>18</sup>

We do more than experience these stimuli; we react to them in accordance with their appeal to that innermost essence of our being, "l'âme." Our different organs permit us to receive various sensations; each one, in fact, has a different function and location, with the exception of that of touch, which is general and diffuse.

Quand deux perceptions sont entièrement différentes l'une de l'autre, ou qu'elles ne se conviennent que sous l'idée générale de sensation, on désigne par différens *sens* la puissance qu'a l'âme de recevoir ces différentes perceptions. Ainsi la vue et l'ouïe dénotent différentes puissances de recevoir les idées de couleurs & de sons; & quoique les couleurs comme les sons, aient entre elles de très-grandes différences; néanmoins il y a beaucoup plus de rapport entre les couleurs les plus opposées, qu'entre une couleur & un son; & c'est pourquoi l'on regarde les couleurs comme des perceptions qui appartiennent à un même *sens*; tous les *sens* semblent avoir des organes distinguées, excepté celui du toucher, qui est répandu plus ou moins par tout le corps.<sup>19</sup>

In practically every instance, we are conscious of either a definitely pleasant or unpleasant reaction to a stimulus. Thus there arises a certain mental attitude as well, a "sentiment," originating in and conditioned by the primary sensation.

Il n'y a presque point d'objet, dont notre âme s'occupe, qui ne soit une occasion de bien ou de mal-être: ainsi nous nous trouverons agréable-

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, art. "Sensation," t. XV, p. 36 (art. by Diderot).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, art. "Sens," t. XV, p. 24 (art. by Diderot).

ment affectés d'une forme régulière, d'une pièce d'architecture ou de peinture, d'un morceau de musique; & nous sentons intérieurement que ce plaisir nous vient naturellement de la contemplation de l'idée qui est alors présente à notre esprit, avec toutes ses circonstances; quoique quelques-unes de ces idées ne renferment rien en elles de ce que nous appellons *perception sensible*; & dans celles qui le renferment, le plaisir vient de quelque uniformité, ordre, arrangement ou imitation, & non pas des simples idées de couleur, de son.<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, there develops within us a corresponding set of thought patterns which are evoked under certain conditions. These may be known as "le plaisir de sentiment"; they are experienced as the result of subjection to an external impulse.

Le seul plaisir de sentiment, que nos philosophes semblent considérer, est celui qui accompagne les simples idées de sensation. Mais il y a un très-grand nombre de sentimens agréables, dans ces idées complexes des objets, auxquels nous donnons les noms de *beaux* et d'*harmonieux*; que l'on appelle ces idées de beauté & d'harmonie, des perceptions des sens extérieurs de la vue et de l'ouïe, ou non, cela n'y fait rien: on devroit plutôt les appeler un *sens interne*, ou un *sentiment intérieur*, ne fût-ce seulement que pour les distinguer des autres sensations de la vue et de l'ouïe, que l'on peut avoir sans aucune perception de beauté et d'harmonie.<sup>21</sup>

These generalities of "beauty and harmony" are logical developments of the fact that our sensations are never individual experiences, but are invariably of a composite nature. We think we are reacting to a unitary stimulus, but try as we may to analyze it and to prove it as such, we are obliged to recognize that there are always several factors working at once upon us and producing what we are led to consider as a single, isolated phenomenon.

Nos *sensations* . . . sont confuses; & c'est ce qui fait conjecturer, que ce ne sont pas des perceptions simples, quoi qu'en dise le célèbre Locke. Ce qui aide à la conjecture, c'est que nous éprouvons tous les jours des *sensations* qui nous paroissent simples dans le moment même, mais que nous découvrons ensuite ne l'être nullement . . . Toute *sensation*, celle du ton, par exemple, ou de la lumière en général, quelque simple, quelque indivisible qu'elle nous paroisse, est un composé d'idées, est un assemblage ou amas de petites perceptions qui suivent dans notre âme si rapidement, & dont chacune s'y arrête si peu, ou qui s'y présentent à la fois en si grand nombre, que l'âme ne pouvant les distinguer l'une de l'autre, n'a de ce composé qu'une seule perception très confuse, par égard

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

aux petites parties ou perceptions qui forment ce composé; mais d'autre côté, très-claire en ce que l'âme la distingue nettement de toute autre suite ou assemblage de perceptions; d'où vient que chaque *sensation* confuse, à la regarder elle-même, devient très-claire, si vous l'opposez à une *sensation* différente.<sup>22</sup>

Starting from the original physical impulse, and analyzing the mental set-up which follows, the sensualist eventually rises to the heights of making the cult of this theory the basis of a form of religion. Through his senses he is ultimately led to the recognition of the existence of God and of a universe external to himself. The doctrine would seem to culminate in this religious interpretation, for the question of belief in any higher Being or Intelligence constitutes the essence of all philosophy and is, furthermore, a crucial question at this time. The exponents of this idea, then, push their principles to their logical extreme, a conclusion which is all the more important as it is distinctly controversial particularly at this period in the history of French thought.

The "creed" which is the natural outgrowth of the sensationalistic theory is expounded at some length in the article on "Sensation" in the *Encyclopédie*.

. . . nos *sensations* font la preuve la plus convaincante que nous ayons de l'existence de la matière. C'est par elles que Dieu nous avertit de notre existence; car quoique Dieu soit la cause universelle & immédiate qui agit sur notre âme, sur laquelle, quand on y pense, on voit bien que la matière ne peut agir réellement & physiquement; quoiqu'il suffise des seules *sensations* que nous recevons à chaque moment, pour démontrer qu'il y a hors de nous un esprit dont le pouvoir est infini; cependant la raison pour laquelle cet esprit tout-puissant assujettit notre âme à cette suite si variée, mais si réglée, de perceptions confuses, qui n'ont que des mouvements pour objet, cette raison ne peut être prise d'ailleurs, que de ces mouvemens mêmes, qui arrivent en effet dans la matière actuellement existante; & le but de l'esprit infini qui n'agit jamais au hasard, ne peut être autre, que de nous manifester l'existence de cette matière avec ces divers mouvemens. Il n'y a point de voie plus propre pour nous instruire de ce fait. L'idée seule de la matière, nous découvreroit bien sa nature, mais ne nous apprendroit jamais son existence, puisqu'il ne lui est point essentiel d'exister. Mais l'application involontaire de notre âme à cette idée, . . . nous conduit infailliblement à croire qu'elle existe avec toutes ses diverses modifications. L'âme conduite par le créateur dans cette suite réglée de perceptions, est convaincue qu'il doit y avoir un monde matériel hors d'elle, qui soit le fondement, la cause exemplaire de cet

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, art. "Sensation," t. XV, pp. 34-35 (art. by Diderot).

ordre, et avec lequel ces perceptions aient un rapport de vérité. Ainsi, quoique dans l'immense variété d'objets que les sens présentent à notre esprit, Dieu seul agisse sur notre esprit, chaque objet sensible avec toutes ses propriétés, peut passer pour la cause de la *sensation* que nous en avons, parce qu'il est la raison suffisante de cette perception, & le fondement de sa vérité.<sup>23</sup>

Given this widespread and growing interest in the doctrine, it is not difficult to determine the influence it may have had upon the close associates of the *philosophes* and dilettantes who were its advocates. The relationship between l'abbé Condillac, Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau is well known. Rousseau knows Condillac through the family of the latter's brother, and he is one of the first people with whom Jean-Jacques establishes connections in his early days in Paris. It is through Jean-Jacques, moreover, that he meets Diderot; and through him, also, that the editor of the *Encyclopédie* becomes interested in the scientific aspirations of the author of the *Traité des Sensations*. It is Diderot, again, who finds a publisher for Condillac's *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* and Rousseau tells us of their weekly dinners "tête à tête en pique-nique" at the Hôtel du Panier-Fleuri.<sup>24</sup>

Thus there exists at this time an intimate relationship between these "young intellectuals," who, with others in their immediate circle of associates, exchange ideas freely on all sorts of subjects. Diderot is an avid talker, scattering ideas like drops from a splashing fountain. Rousseau, eager and impressionable, ready for anything and everything which may come his way, becomes familiar with the sensualistic theory through these contacts.

It is quite possible that Diderot likewise suggests to him the notion of giving it an aesthetic interpretation, for, as I have already indicated, he is interested in "l'anatomie métaphysique des sens."<sup>25</sup> Not only does he admit its scientific basis, but he also wishes to make an artistic application of it as well. Hence he launches on an analysis of the fine arts from this point of view.

He grants, of course, that any art object, of whatever nature, stirs us only in the measure in which we react to it.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>24</sup> Rousseau, *Les Confessions, Oeuvres*, ed. Hachette, Paris, 1865, v. VIII, p. 246.

<sup>25</sup> See p. 31.



Un beau tableau, un poëme, une belle musique, ne nous plaisent que par les rapports que nous y remarquons.<sup>26</sup>

Given this apperception on our part, Diderot goes on to say that each of these fields has its own language, its own medium of expression, and that true appreciation consists in understanding these various series of what he calls "hiéroglyphes."

. . . les expressions du musicien et du poëte n'en sont que des hiéroglyphes.<sup>27</sup>

. . . si on ne parle pas aussi distinctement avec un instrument qu'avec la bouche, et si les sons ne peignent pas aussi nettement la pensée que le discours, encore disent-ils quelque chose.<sup>28</sup>

As all creative art is an imitation of nature, its value is to be determined by the faithfulness with which it expresses, in its own set of "hieroglyphics," this inspiration.

Moreover, Diderot feels that there is a distinct analogy between music, poetry and painting: he feels that they all have something in common as far as their appeal to our senses and their aesthetic interpretation are concerned. As this question has not yet been thoroughly studied, he wishes that it might be done.

. . . chaque art d'imitation [a] son hiéroglyphe et . . . il serait à souhaiter qu'un écrivain instruit et délicat en entreprît la comparaison.

. . . l'harmonie musicale [entre] nécessairement dans cette comparaison.<sup>29</sup>

. . . rassembler les beautés communes de la poésie, de la peinture et de la musique; en montrer les analogies; expliquer comment le poëte, le peintre et le musicien rendent la même image; saisir les emblèmes fugitifs de leur expression; examiner s'il n'y aurait pas quelque similitude entre ces emblèmes, etc., c'est ce qui reste à faire, . . .<sup>30</sup>

In the development of his theory of "symbols," Diderot discusses particularly those of music and poetry. One leads into the other so that in the last analysis they are scarcely to be differentiated.

. . . l'harmonie syllabique et l'harmonie périodique engendraient une espèce de hiéroglyphe particulier à la poésie . . .<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Diderot, *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, *Œuvres*, v. 1, p. 406.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 385.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 390-391.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 391 and 385.

His general principles are summed up by Trévoux:

. . . il faut la considérer [l'harmonie oratoire] dans les mots et dans la période; et . . . c'est du concours de ces deux harmonies [l'harmonie oratoire et l'état de langue perfectionnée] que résulte l'hiéroglyphe poétique.

. . . cet hiéroglyphe rend tout excellent poète difficile à bien entendre, et presque impossible à bien traduire.

. . . tout art d'imitation a son hiéroglyphe; ce qu'on m'a démontré par un essai de comparaison des hiéroglyphes de la musique, de la peinture, de la poésie.<sup>32</sup>

Diderot illustrates this comparison in an interesting and amusing manner. He feels that there are very definite similarities between these three modes of expression. He experiments with a line of poetry, showing that it can be reproduced in the other two arts. One recognizes and understands the sentiment which is being portrayed, although it appears under three different guises. For an example, he takes a line from *Le Lutrin* of Boileau:

Soupire, étend les bras, ferme les yeux et s'endort.

He considers the verse first as a word-picture, then gives an interpretation of it transferred to music and finally makes a drawing of the relaxed and sleeping figure conjured up by this simple but effective characterization.<sup>33</sup>

He also demonstrates his theory with other quotations from poetry, firmly convinced that there is a central kernel of artistic truth in each individual creation which will bear transcription into the language of the other two fields. It is perhaps of interest to note that while Rousseau is probably familiar with these ideas of Diderot, he does not subscribe to them. Their divergence of opinion will become evident in the course of the following discussion.

What is it that constitutes the appeal of poetry? Why are we stirred by it? Why do some of us get so much out of it, some so little? Diderot offers an explanation. It is more than mere words. It is imagery, it is figurative speech, which presupposes a certain responsiveness and imagination on the part of the individual if he is to understand it at all.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387.

Il passe . . . dans le discours du poëte un esprit qui en meut et vivifie toutes les syllables. Qu'est-ce que cet esprit? j'en ai quelquefois senti la présence; mais tout ce que j'en sais, c'est que c'est lui qui fait que les choses sont dites et représentées tout à la fois; que dans le même temps que l'entendement les saisit, l'âme en est émue, l'imagination les voit et l'oreille les entend, et que le discours n'est plus seulement un enchaînement de termes énergiques qui exposent la pensée, mais que c'est encore un tissu d'hieroglyphes entassés les uns sur les autres qui la peignent. Je pourrais dire, en ce sens, que toute poésie est emblématique.<sup>84</sup>

This implies that the auditor or reader is already predisposed toward a sympathetic reception of what the poet is trying to say.

With regard to music, Diderot goes more deeply into the examination of the physiological basis of its effect upon us and of our widely diversified reaction to it.

En musique, le plaisir de la sensation dépend d'une disposition particulière, non-seulement de l'oreille, mais de tout le système des nerfs. S'il y a des têtes sonnantes, il y a aussi des corps que j'appellerais volontiers harmoniques; des hommes en qui toutes les fibres oscillent avec tant de promptitude et de vivacité, que, sur l'expérience des mouvements violents que l'harmonie leur cause, ils sentent la possibilité de mouvements plus violents encore, et atteignent à l'idée d'une sorte de musique qui les ferait mourir de plaisir . . .<sup>85</sup>

He explains why this, of all the arts, has the ability to stir us the most. It requires a more finely attuned make-up on the part of the individual than either painting or poetry; and its effects are correspondingly deeper and more moving. It may be, of course, that music is pleasing without giving rise to any particular sentiment. One may enjoy the agreeable succession of sounds, without being conscious of a specific mental picture. Diderot also applies this principle to visual sensations which may likewise produce merely a "passive" reaction in the observer.

. . . ces morceaux de musique qui vous affectent agréablement sans réveiller en vous ni peinture ni perception distincte de rapports, ne flattent votre oreille que comme l'arc-en-ciel plaît à vos yeux, d'un plaisir de sensation pure et simple . . . si les astres ne perdaient rien de leur éclat sur la toile, vous les y trouveriez plus beaux qu'au firmament; le plaisir réfléchi qui naît de l'imitation s'unissant au plaisir direct et naturel de la sensation de l'objet.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 408.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 407-408.

Discussing at still greater length the technique of music as an art, he then studies its effect upon the listener.

. . . dans la musique, il faut quelquefois dérouter l'oreille, pour surprendre et contenter l'imagination. On pourrait observer aussi, qu'au lieu que les licences dans l'arrangement des mots ne sont jamais permises qu'en faveur de l'harmonie du style, les licences dans l'harmonie musicale ne le sont, au contraire, souvent que pour faire naître plus exactement, et dans l'ordre le plus naturel, les idées que le musicien veut exciter.<sup>87</sup>

In one last quotation, he again carefully compares the three arts. Of them all, he grants to music the most stirring qualities.

Au reste la musique a plus besoin de trouver en nous ces favorables dispositions d'organes, que ni la peinture, ni la poésie. Son hiéroglyphe est si léger et si fugitif; il est si facile de le perdre ou de le méinterpréter, que le beau morceau de symphonie ne ferait pas un grand effet, si le plaisir infallible et subit de la sensation pure et simple n'était infiniment au-dessus de celui d'une expression souvent équivoque. La peinture montre l'objet même, la poésie le décrit, la musique en excite à peine une idée; elle n'a de ressources que dans les intervalles et la durée des sons. Et quelle analogie y a-t-il entre cette espèce de crayons et le printemps, les ténèbres, la solitude, etc., et la plupart des objets? Comment se fait-il donc que des trois arts imitateurs de la nature, celui dont l'expression est la plus arbitraire et la moins précise parle le plus fortement à l'âme? Serait-ce que montrant moins les objets il laisse plus de carrière à notre imagination; ou qu'ayant besoin de secousses pour être émus, la musique est plus propre que la peinture et la poésie à produire en nous cet effet tumultueux?<sup>88</sup>

In connection with what may be considered the super-refinement of the possibilities for the aesthetic development of the five senses which Diderot designates by the resounding title of "l'anatomie métaphysique des sens" (see above, p. 31), it is of interest to note a similar attitude and classification indicated in the *Encyclopédie*. D'Alembert touches upon it in the *Discours Préliminaire*, where he gives special attention to music as the most suggestive of the fine arts because of its wide range of opportunities for imitating nature. He feels that although it is still in a somewhat rudimentary state, it will eventually attain a rich perfection by virtue of its very essence. Its potentialities lie deeper than the stimulation of certain feelings and sentiments by means of tunes and tones, for it has the power actually to

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 408-409.

create the primary sensations whence they spring. Pleasant or unpleasant impressions may be made upon the auditor at the will of the composer, thanks to this characteristic.

In his discussion, D'Alembert places painting and sculpture first, because they approach more closely the objects which they attempt to depict and consequently act the more directly upon us. Then comes poetry, which has only words with which to achieve its effects, and lastly music, the least tangible of all, but, he feels, the one which is richest in possibilities for development, even to the attainment of perfection.

A la tête des connoissances qui consistent dans l'imitation, doivent être placées la Peinture et la Sculpture, parce que ce sont celles de toutes où l'imitation approche le plus des objets qu'elle représente, & parle le plus directement aux sens . . . ”

La Poésie qui vient après la Peinture & la Sculpture, & qui n'emploie pour l'imitation que les mots disposés suivant une harmonie agréable à l'oreille, parle plutôt à l'imagination qu'aux sens . . . Enfin la Musique, qui parle à la fois à l'imagination & aux sens, tient le dernier rang dans l'ordre de l'imitation; non que son imitation soit moins parfaite dans les objets qu'elle se propose de représenter, mais parce qu'elle semble bornée jusqu'ici à un plus petit nombre d'images; ce qu'on doit moins attribuer à sa nature, qu'à trop peu d'invention & de ressource dans la plupart de ceux qui la cultivent . . . La Musique, qui dans son origine n'étoit peut-être destinée à représenter que du bruit, est devenue peu-à-peu une espèce de discours ou même de langue, par laquelle on exprime les différens sentimens de l'âme, ou plutôt ses différentes passions: mais pourquoi réduire cette expression aux passions seules, & ne pas l'étendre, autant qu'il est possible, jusqu'aux sensations mêmes? <sup>40</sup>

The secret of the unlimited powers of music lies, then, in its ability to produce actual sensations as well as the sentiments which it is trying to arouse or the picture which it is trying to represent. Since the other arts enjoy only a restricted imagery, they can do no more than seek to stimulate a sympathetic reception on the part of the reader or observer through their mental or spiritual appeal. Music has the advantage of being able to create the stimuli themselves which are the basis of all reaction in the auditor. This aspect of it has heretofore been neglected, but once its importance is realized, music will be in a position to exceed all the other arts in the field which is of capital impor-

<sup>39</sup> *Encyclopédie, Discours Préliminaire*, t. I, p. xi.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

tance for each one of them: the stirring and graphic presentation of the story it has to tell.

Quoique les perceptions que nous recevons par divers organes different entr'elles autant que leurs objets, on peut néanmoins les comparer sous un autre point de vûe qui leur est commun, c'est-à-dire par la situation de plaisir ou de trouble où elles mettent notre âme. Un objet effrayant, un bruit terrible, produisent chacun en nous une émotion par laquelle nous pouvons jusqu'à un certain point les rapprocher, & que nous désignons souvent dans l'un et l'autre cas, ou par le même nom, ou par des noms synonymes. Je ne vois donc point pourquoi un Musicien qui auroit à peindre un objet effrayant, ne pourroit pas y réussir, en cherchant dans la nature l'espèce de bruit qui peut produire en nous l'émotion la plus semblable à celle que cet objet y excite. J'en dis autant des sensations agréables . . . Toute Musique qui ne peint rien n'est que du bruit; & sans l'habitude qui dénature tout, elle ne feroit guere plus de plaisir qu'une suite de mots harmonieux & sonores dénués d'ordre et de liaison. Il est vrai qu'un Musicien attentif à tout peindre, nous présenteroit en plusieurs circonstances des tableaux d'harmonie qui ne seroient point fait pour des sens vulgaires . . .<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the *Discours Préliminaire*, there are several articles in the *Encyclopédie* which treat the question of the importance and function of the senses, the analysis of the fine arts and the possibilities of enjoyment afforded us by their cultivation. We should learn to appreciate the works of the great masters, for this not only develops the keenness of our perceptions, but also promises rich reward in the pleasure which is to be found in an intelligent survey of these fields. In the article "Sensation" Diderot distinguishes between the respective characteristics of the five senses in this manner:

La vue est quelque chose de plus délicat & de plus habile que l'ouïe; l'ouïe a visiblement un pareil avantage sur l'odorat & sur le goût; & ces deux derniers genres de *sensation* l'emportent par le même endroit sur celui du toucher.<sup>42</sup>

Conversely, the impulse coming in upon one varies from that destined for another.

L'impression corporelle sur les organes des sens, n'est qu'un tact plus ou moins subtil & délicat, à proportion de la nature des organes qui en doivent être affectés. Celui qui fait la vision est le plus léger de tous: le bruit & le son nous touchent moins délicatement que la lumière et les

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, art. "Sensation," t. XV, p. 35.

couleurs; l'odeur et la saveur encore moins délicatement que le son; le froid et le chaud, & les autres qualités tactiles, sont l'impression la plus forte et la plus rude."<sup>43</sup>

This phenomenon opens the way to a new realm. As a result of the proper attitude and experience, we can find beauty and inspiration in the simplest of artistic expressions. It is particularly in the field of painting and music that such opportunities abound. A sane and sound exercising of our senses will reveal to us spheres of great appeal and of unceasing interest.

En un mot, le bon usage de ceux [des sens] que nous avons, suffit à notre félicité. Jouissons donc, comme il convient, des *sens* dont la nature a bien voulu nous gratifier; ceux, de l'ouïe & de la vue me semblent être les plus délicats & les plus chastes de tous. Les plaisirs qui les remuent, sont les plus innocens; & les arts à qui nous devons ces plaisirs, méritent une place distinguée parmi les arts libéraux, comme étant des plus ingénieux, puisqu'on y emploie toute la subtilité des combinaisons mathématiques. La peinture réveille l'imagination & fixe la mémoire; la musique agite le cœur, & soulève les passions. Elles font passer les plaisirs dans l'âme: l'une par les yeux, l'autre par l'oreille."<sup>44</sup>

As both a *philosophe* and a private individual, Diderot is concerned with these theories which subsequently become a topic of public interest just at the time of his intimacy with Rousseau. Always generous with his ideas, he doubtless discusses them in the presence of his friend. Thus it would seem quite logical that Rousseau should also think about them. Not technical in turn of mind, he is perhaps attracted by the aesthetic interpretation Diderot reads into basic scientific facts. Literature appeals to him as an opportunity to develop his own opinions and experiences and he may have been moved to transfer into that field the principles which arise from this school of thought. In this respect, he may be considered as the connecting link between the two. There is brought to letters a new concept, a new outlook, a new method of approach which is to bear its fruit some generations later. While the *Émile* is based upon this doctrine, it cannot be said that Rousseau consciously adopts sensualism as the foundation for his fictional or auto-biographical works. Naturally responsive and highly imaginative, however, he may well

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, art. "Sens," t. XV, p. 31 (citation from the Chevalier de Jaucourt).

have had his attention brought to it through his contacts with Diderot and the others, and he is moved to give popular expression to what he has originally heard expounded in more learned circles.

Although he is doubtless influenced by these associates, Rousseau does not always think as they do, or he makes a different application of a common principle. This can readily be seen in the attitude which he takes in his own writings. He is converted to the sensualistic theory; the *Émile* shows to what extent he bases early education on the free development of the five senses. Religion, ethics, moral qualities all grow out of the assimilation and interpretation of experiences originating in physical stimuli. To this extent he agrees with his friend and master, Diderot, who says in his *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* that

. . . la perception des rapports [between the basic sensations] est un des premiers pas de notre raison.<sup>45</sup>

But when it comes to the field of aesthetics, Rousseau thinks differently: indeed, his opinion concerning the analogy between color and sound is in direct contrast with that of Diderot.

The latter's theory, which is that of a close relationship between the two, has already been discussed. Before we compare it with Rousseau's, however, I think it interesting to study a concrete example of Diderot's idea. He illustrates his point by taking a deaf-mute to see the ingenious *orgue des couleurs* of le Père Castel.<sup>46</sup> This is a kind of machine with which, by the aid of rotating fan-shaped sections, each of a different color, one may project upon a screen a series of colors and their nuances, run off in succession at the will of the operator. Diderot considers the resultant combinations a "sonate de couleurs," or as "la musique oculaire."<sup>47</sup>

The first mention of this mechanism which we find in Diderot is perhaps in that often condemned early work, *Les Bijoux indiscrets*, which dates from 1748. In it there are at least two references to the color machine of le Père Castel. Here, as in subsequent writings, Diderot gives it a sympathetic reception, apparently convinced of its value and practicability. He even

<sup>45</sup> Diderot, *op. cit.*, *Oeuvres*, v. I, p. 405.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*, *Les Bijoux Indiscrets*, *Oeuvres*, v. IV, p. 305.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*, *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, *Oeuvres*, v. I, p. 356.



makes it the focal point of a dramatic little scene, for he realizes its potentialities with regard to the selection and creation of new modes, particularly in women's clothes. While the predominating tone of the *Bijoux* is one of bantering mockery, the attention which their author pays to this unusual *clavecin* would seem to indicate an active interest in it on his part.

The device goes by various names; it is known as *l'orgue des couleurs*,<sup>48</sup> *la machine aux couleurs*,<sup>49</sup> *le clavecin oculaire*.<sup>50</sup> In his references to it, Diderot uses all of these terms as well as a generous enumeration of the types of "movement" which can be played upon it. He pushes his theory of the analogy between color and music to an extreme in his effort to render their parallelism more graphic.

Two natives of the land of *Congo* are discussing the peculiarities of the inhabitants of the Earth. They speak of the inventor of the color machine,

. . . un bon homme qui mettait de l'esprit à tout, . . .<sup>51</sup>

Mangogul then describes his creation. It is

. . . un certain clavecin où il avait diapasoné les couleurs selon l'échelle des sons, et sur lequel il prétendait exécuter pour les yeux une sonate, un allegro, un presto, un adagio, un cantabile, aussi agréable que ces pièces bien faites le sont pour les oreilles.<sup>52</sup>

The second interlocutor has not only heard of this device, she has also made use of it. It is as helpful as it is amusing, for it can be made to serve in an experimental way in the choice of the colors which are to be assembled in a lady's *toilette*. If one seeks novelty, or merely harmony of tones, this instrument offers the opportunity to study the effect of different combinations before actually making a definite selection.

Une pièce de notre ajustement étant donnée, il ne s'agit que de frapper un certain nombre de touches du clavecin pour trouver les harmoniques de cette pièce, et déterminer les couleurs différentes des autres.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Id.*, *Les Bijoux indiscrets*, *Oeuvres*, v. IV, p. 305.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*, *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, *Oeuvres*, v. I, p. 357.

<sup>50</sup> *Encyclopédie*, art. "Clavessin oculaire" (material edited by Diderot).

<sup>51</sup> Diderot, *Les Bijoux indiscrets*, *Oeuvres*, v. IV, p. 203.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

There follows an account of the use to which it is put by the Sultana of *Congo* with the aid of her maid-servants. She wishes to wear a gay ensemble which will be in keeping with her brilliant headdress. A servant "plays" upon the *clavecin*, projecting a series of colors upon the screen, with varying degrees of success. At last a satisfactory combination is found, and once her decision in the matter of dress is made, the Sultana passes to other things. In the course of the exposition, the discussion descends to the level of absurd exaggeration; this is another flash of Diderot's irrepressible satire, but beneath his air of levity there can be detected a genuine interest in the principle of the machine.

Discussing it more seriously elsewhere, he wonders what effect it would have upon a person who has never had any conception of sound or of any musical instrument. When he takes his defective friend to see it, the results are just as he had anticipated. The deaf-mute is struck with admiration for such "symphonies" as he sees played upon it. Having no idea of music, he cannot compare this contraption with the piano; but he feels instinctively that each color represents a certain value, that with skill one could combine these separate "tones," create phrases, and give expression to "tout un discours en couleurs."<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, he feels that he has suddenly seized upon the essence of music and the rôle of the various devices with which it is produced:

il crut que la musique était une façon particulière de communiquer la pensée, et que les instruments, . . . étaient entre nos mains, d'autres organes de la parole.<sup>65</sup>

This view of the situation is all the more striking as Diderot gives expression to it, supported by this substantiating proof, in the very year in which the *Encyclopédie* begins to appear (1751). As editor-in-chief, he certainly is familiar with the bulk of the material which composes this monumental work; as a student "des sciences, des arts et des métiers," he also conscientiously seeks an objective point of view in their treatment. It would seem, however, that much of the discussion of these features of the sensualistic doctrine, namely, the supposed analogy between

<sup>64</sup> Diderot, *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, *Oeuvres*, v. I, p. 357.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

color and sound and the efficacy of the "orgue des couleurs" of le Père Castel, indicates on the part of the writer of the articles in which they are analyzed quite a different attitude from that of Diderot. They tend rather to express the ideas of Rousseau as we find them in his *Essai sur l'origine des langues*.<sup>55</sup> Familiar with these ideas in general, and noticing perhaps the divergence of opinion between the editor and his *Encyclopédie*, Rousseau may well have considered both sides, and then have adopted and expressed what he considers the more logical and valid of the two.

To return to the assumption of the basic similarity between color and sound, one finds a rather careful refutation of it in the treatment of *Lumière* in the *Encyclopédie*. This is even hinted at in the section on *Couleur*, where the identity of number between the seven basic notes in music and the fundamental colors in the spectrum is mentioned. After an exposition of the investigations and conclusions of such men of science as Newton and Buffon with regard to the question, the writer then indicates the obvious fallacy in a theory which would wish to compare the two.

L'étendue proportionnelle de ces sept intervalles de couleurs, répond assez juste à l'étendue proportionnelle des sept tons de la Musique: c'est un phénomène singulier; mais il faut bien se garder d'en conclure qu'il y ait aucune analogie entre les sensations des couleurs et celles des tons: car nos sensations n'ont rien de semblable aux objets qui les causent.<sup>56</sup>

It is under *Lumière*, however, that there appears a more thorough analysis and refutation of this analogy. Basing its arguments on the theories of le Père Malebranche and M. Huygens, it very neatly undermines their whole structure of thought.

Le Père Malebranche déduit l'explication de la lumière, d'une analogie qu'il lui suppose avec le son. On convient que le son est produit par les

<sup>55</sup> The date of composition of this *Essai* is uncertain. H. Beaudouin in his *La Vie et les oeuvres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Paris, 1891, places it between the *Discours sur les Sciences* and the *Discours sur l'Inégalité* (p. 323). He adds, "Rousseau lui donna aussi le titre d'*Essai sur le Principe de la Mélodie* . . . Ce petit ouvrage, qu'il avait été question d'imprimer en 1761, ne le fut que beaucoup plus tard, . . . La date où il fut composé n'est même pas parfaitement connue; mais elle est suffisamment indiquée par le contexte." (*ibid.*)

<sup>56</sup> *Encyclopédie*, art. "Couleur," t. IV, p. 329 (art. by D'Alembert).

vibrations des parties insensibles du corps sonore. Ces vibrations ont beau être plus grandes ou plus petites, c'est-à-dire se faire dans de plus grands ou de plus petits arcs de cercle, si malgré cela elles sont d'une même durée, elles ne produiront en ce cas dans nos sensations, d'autre différence que celle du plus ou moins grand degré de force; au lieu que si elles ont différentes durées, c'est-à-dire si un des corps sonores fait dans un même tems plus de vibrations qu'un autre, les deux sons différeront alors en espèce, & on distinguera deux différens tons, les vibrations promptes formant les tons aigus, et les plus lentes les tons graves.<sup>87</sup>

This is sound and logical as far as it goes, but le Père Malebranche pushes still further his comparison of the physics of light production with that of sound, two phenomena which cannot be so compared. Although the principle seems reasonable enough, it not only deceives Malebranche, but serves as a pitfall for the unsuspecting Huygens as well.

Le Père Malebranche suppose qu'il en est de même de la *lumière* & des couleurs. Toutes les parties du corps lumineux sont selon lui dans un mouvement rapide; & ce mouvement produit des pulsations très-vives dans la matière subtile qui se trouve entre le corps lumineux & l'oeil; ces pulsations sont appellées par le Père Malebranche, *vibration de pression*. Selon que ces vibrations sont plus ou moins grandes, le corps paroît plus ou moins lumineux; & selon qu'elles sont plus promptes ou plus lentes, le corps paroît de telle ou telle couleur.<sup>88</sup>

M. Huygens compares the spread of light to that of sound by waves vibrating through space, as rings spread out in succession from a pebble thrown into a pool. The argument is not valid, for light and sound are not of a similar nature and hence do not act in an identical manner upon the organs which are equipped to receive their stimulus.

Selon ce grand géomètre, comme le son s'étend tout-à-l'entour du lieu où il a été produit par un mouvement qui passe successivement d'une partie de l'air à l'autre, & que cette propagation se fait par des surfaces ou ondes sphériques, à cause que l'extension de ce mouvement est également prompte de tous côtés; de même il n'y a point de doute selon lui, que la *lumière* ne se transmette du corps lumineux jusqu'à nos yeux, par le moyen de quelque fluide intermédiaire, & que ce mouvement ne s'étende par des ondes sphériques semblables à celles qu'une pierre excite dans l'eau quand on l'y jette.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> *Encyclopédie*, art. "Lumière," t. IX, p. 718 (art. by D'Alembert).

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

The fallacy in this reasoning is the failure of M. Huygens to recognize the fundamental divergence between these two censory impulses. Thus, his theory would seem to be unsound from the very start, since he proceeds from a false assumption.

M. Huyghens [*sic*] déduit de ce système, d'une manière fort ingénieuse, les différentes propriétés de la *lumière*, les lois de la réflexion, & de la refraction, etc. mais ce qu'il paroît avoir le plus de peine à expliquer, & ce qui est en effet le plus difficile dans cette hypothèse, c'est la propagation de la *lumière* en ligne droite. En effet M. Huyghens compare la propagation de la *lumière* à celle du son: pourquoi donc la *lumière* ne se propage-t-elle pas en tout sens comme le son? L'auteur fait voir assez bien que l'action ou la pression de l'onde lumineuse doit être la plus forte dans l'endroit où cette onde est coupée par une ligne menée du corps lumineux; mais il ne suffit pas de prouver que la pression ou l'action de la *lumière* en ligne droite, est plus forte qu'en aucun autre sens, il faut encore démontrer qu'elle n'existe que dans ce sens-là; c'est ce que l'expérience nous prouve, & ce qui ne suit point du système de M. Huyghens.<sup>60</sup>

Aside from the expression of the attitude of Diderot as it appears in his *Lettre sur les aveugles* and *sur les sourds et muets*, and the quotations given above, there seems to be little indication of a similar idea in the immediate circle of the Encyclopedists. To judge from the articles where this subject is most likely to be discussed, Diderot and le Père Castel seem to stand somewhat alone in their theory of the analogy of color and sound. The *Encyclopédie* even adopts a tone of amused condescension in speaking of those confused minds which fall prey to such an error of thought and judgment. While it gives the *orgue des couleurs* generous treatment under *Clavecin oculaire*, the writer does not hesitate to condemn such an instrument as much because of its intricacy as by reason of its impracticability.

The account of it is detailed and technical. It is apparently arousing considerable interest at this time, and the conclusions stated here concerning its efficacy form a striking contrast with the experience of Diderot's deaf-mute friend.<sup>61</sup> While its feasibility is admitted and explained, however, its universal adoption is seriously challenged. It is an

. . . instrument à touches analogue au *clavecin* auriculaire, composé d'autant d'octaves de coulurs par tons & demi-tons, que le *clavecin*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> See p. 47.

auriculaire a d'octaves de sons par tons et demi-tons, destiné à donner à l'âme par les yeux les mêmes sensations agréables de mélodie & d'harmonie de couleurs, que celles de mélodie & d'harmonie de sons que le *clavecin* ordinaire lui communique par l'oreille.

Que faut-il pour faire un *clavecin* ordinaire? des cordes diapasonnées selon un certain système de musique, & le moyen de faire resonner ces cordes. Que faudra-t-il pour un *clavecin* oculaire? des couleurs diapasonnées selon le même système que les sons, & le moyen de les produire aux yeux: mais l'un est aussi possible que l'autre.<sup>2</sup>

The fundamentals of sound and color production on the two instruments are recognized as being similar.

Les règles de la musique auriculaire ont toutes pour fondement la production naturelle & primitive de l'accord parfait par un corps sonore quelconque: soit ce corps *ut*; il donne les sons *ut*, *sol*, *mi*, auxquels correspondent le bleu, le rouge, le jaune, que plusieurs artistes & physiiciens regardent comme les trois couleurs primitives. La musique oculaire a donc dans ses principes un fondement analogue à la musique auriculaire.<sup>3</sup>

They can also be compared as to set-up and method of manipulation, but beyond that obvious difficulties arise which militate against the ingenious machine.

Les objections qu'on a faites contre la musique & l'instrument oculaire se présentent si naturellement, qu'il est inutile de les rapporter: nous osons seulement assurer qu'elles sont si parfaitement, sinon détruites, au-moins balancées par les réponses tirées de la comparaison des deux musiques, qu'il n'y a plus que l'expérience qui puisse décider la question.<sup>4</sup>

The essential difference between the two is, after all, a rather important and serious one.

La seule différence importante entre les deux *claveccins* qui nous ait frappés, c'est que quoiqu'il y ait sur le *clavecin* ordinaire un grand intervalle entre sa première et sa dernière touche, l'oreille n'aperçoit point de discontinuité entre les sons; ils sont liés pour elle comme si les touches étoient toutes voisines, au lieu que les couleurs seront distantes & disjointes à la vue. Pour remédier à cet inconvénient dans la mélodie & l'harmonie oculaires, il faudroit trouver quelque expédient qui liât les couleurs, & les rendit continues pour l'oeil; sinon, dans les airs d'un mouvement extrêmement vif, l'oeil ne sachant quel intervalle de couleurs on va faire, ignorera, après avoir vu un ton où il doit se porter pour appercevoir le ton suivant, & ne saisira dans une batterie de couleurs

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopédie*, art. "Clavecin oculaire," t. III, p. 511.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

que quelques notes éparses de tout un air coloré, ou se tourmentera si fort pour les saisir toutes, qu'il en aura bien-tôt la berlue; & adieu la mélodie & l'harmonie. On pourroit encore ajouter que quand on les saisiroit, il ne seroit pas possible qu'on les retint jamais, & qu'on eût la mémoire d'un air de couleurs, comme on a celle d'un air de sons.<sup>66</sup>

Somehow the writer of this article does not seem to be over-enthusiastic about the *clavecin oculaire*, for he ends his discussion with a touch of irony and dry humor.

On ne peut imaginer une pareille machine sans être très-versé en Musique & en Optique; on ne peut l'exécuter avec succès sans être un rare machiniste.

Le célèbre P. Castel jésuite en est l'inventeur; il l'annonça en 1725. La facture de cet instrument est si extraordinaire, qu'il n'y a que le public peu éclairé qui puisse se plaindre qu'il se fasse toujours & qu'il ne s'achève point.<sup>67</sup>

In view of the animated discussion of the various phases of this question, it is only natural that Rousseau should also give his opinion on it. He belongs to the group which considers the analogy between color and sound an entirely false one. It is in his *Essai sur l'origine des langues* that he develops his idea, readily conceding the existence of a parallelism between melody in music and drawing in a picture. They both serve to indicate the main features and figures of the theme, while the chords and sounds are as the light and shadow which fill in the bare outline.

La mélodie fait précisément dans la musique ce que fait le dessin dans la peinture; c'est elle qui marque les traits et les figures, dont les accords et les sons ne sont que les couleurs.<sup>67</sup>

To the objection that a tune is nothing but a sequence of sounds, he replies:

Sans doute; mais le dessin n'est aussi qu'un arrangement de couleurs. Un orateur se sert d'encre pour tracer ses écrits, est-ce à dire que l'encre soit une liqueur fort éloquente? <sup>68</sup>

The two arts are essentially similar, for the source of their appeal lies in their ability to imitate nature. Were it not for

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 511-512.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 512.

<sup>68</sup> Rousseau, *Essai sur l'origine des langues, Oeuvres*, v. I, p. 397.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

this vital force, they would be reduced to nothing more than technical exercises.

Comme donc la peinture n'est pas l'art de combiner des couleurs d'une manière agréable à la vue, la musique n'est pas non plus l'art de combiner des sons d'une manière agréable à l'oreille. S'il n'y avoit que cela, l'une et l'autre seroient au nombre des sciences naturelles et non pas des beaux-arts. C'est l'imitation seule qui les élève à ce rang. Or, qu'est-ce qui fait de la peinture un art d'imitation? c'est le dessin. Qu'est-ce qui de la musique en fait un autre? c'est la mélodie.<sup>69</sup>

Colors and sounds in themselves, however, have little effect upon us as purely physical stimuli. Their importance lies rather in the psychological or moral reaction which they excite in us. If they fail to arouse any such response, they may possibly afford temporary amusement as a novelty, but their permanent value is to be determined only by the higher concepts which they instil or arouse within us.

Les couleurs et les sons peuvent beaucoup comme représentations et signes, peu de chose comme simples objets des sens. Des suites de sons ou d'accords m'amuseront un moment peut-être; mais, pour me charmer et m'attendrir, il faut que ces suites m'offrent quelque chose qui ne soit ni son ni accord, et qui me vienne émouvoir malgré moi. Les chants même qui ne sont qu'agréables et ne disent rien lassent encore; car ce n'est pas tant l'oreille qui porte le plaisir au coeur, que le coeur qui le porte à l'oreille.<sup>70</sup>

From this point on, however, Rousseau makes a distinction between the type of appeal exercised by the two arts. For him, the eyes are more sensitive and more susceptible to external impulses than are the ears. Thus visual imagery introduced into a spoken or recited communication serves to heighten its effect.

. . . l'on parle aux yeux bien mieux qu'aux oreilles . . . On voit même que les discours les plus éloquens sont ceux où l'on enchâsse le plus d'images; et les sons n'ont jamais plus d'énergie que quand ils font l'effet des couleurs.<sup>71</sup>

He then proceeds to attack what he regards as the definitely false analogy between color and sound. In fact, he devotes considerable space in his *Essai* to the refutation of this erroneous idea. It is in chapter XVI, *Fausse analogie entre les couleurs et les sons*, that he explains why he cannot regard this theory

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 398.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 372.



in any other manner than as a violation of the fundamentals of logic and reasoning. He lays the blame for it on the prevailing spirit of classification and systematizing of all knowledge to the exclusion of any recognition of the possible divergences which nature itself may have established.

On a trouvé dans l'analyse du son les mêmes rapports que dans celle de la lumière. Aussitôt on a saisi vivement cette analogie, sans s'embarrasser de l'expérience et de la raison. L'esprit de système a tout confondu; et, faute de savoir peindre aux oreilles, on s'est avisé de chanter aux yeux.<sup>72</sup>

He takes issue with the *clavecin oculaire*, for which he has no use at all. He is so struck by its inconsistencies that he cannot see how anyone could ever consider it seriously.

J'ai vu ce fameux clavecin sur lequel on prétendoit faire de la musique avec des couleurs; c'étoit bien mal connoître les opérations de la nature, de ne pas voir que l'effet des couleurs est dans leur permanence, et celui des sons dans leur succession.<sup>73</sup>

Here, then, is the crux of the situation: each of the five senses has its own sphere of activity and its own set of reactions to a specialized stimulus.

. . . chaque sens a son champ qui lui est propre. Le champ de la musique est le temps, celui de la peinture est l'espace. Multiplier les sons entendus à la fois, ou développer les couleurs l'une après l'autre, c'est changer leur économie, c'est mettre l'oeil à la place de l'oreille, et l'oreille à la place de l'oeil.<sup>74</sup>

An impulse which is transmitted through the medium of space cannot excite a response comparable to one which functions only through succession of time. One is static, the other mobile; one may even distinguish between them as being characteristic of essentially animate and inanimate objects in nature. Color, hence painting, affords a constant source of stimulation once it is placed on view; music, on the other hand, can be appreciated only as it is played, as the motions which produce it must be continuous or repeated. These two concepts differ so fundamentally that the aesthetic principles growing out of the fine arts which are based upon them can in no wise be considered analogous.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 401-402.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

Toutes les richesses du coloris s'étalent à la fois sur la face de la terre; du premier coup d'oeil tout est vu. Mais plus on regarde et plus on est enchanté; il ne faut plus qu'admirer et contempler sans cesse.

Il n'en est pas ainsi du son; la nature ne l'analyse point et n'en sépare point les harmoniques . . . ou, si quelquefois elle les sépare dans le chant modulé de l'homme et dans le ramage de quelques oiseaux, c'est successivement, et l'un après l'autre . . . Les couleurs sont la parure des êtres inanimés; toute matière est colorée: mais les sons annoncent le mouvement; la voix annonce un être sensible; il n'y a que des corps animés qui chantent.<sup>75</sup>

He then discusses the physics of the problem, just as all the adherents and opponents of the theory have done before him; and again he censures the objectivity of cold reasoning which, in its deductions, takes no account of nature from which it has made its observations. He admits the possibility of comparing the angle of refraction of a beam of light and the wave-length and number of vibrations which constitute a sound.

Or, les rapports de ces angles et de ces nombres [des vibrations du corps sonore en un temps donné] étant les mêmes, l'analogie est évidente. Soit; mais cette analogie est de raison, non de sensation; et ce n'est pas de cela qu'il s'agit . . . Les couleurs sont durables, les sons s'évanouissent, et l'on n'a jamais de certitude que ceux qui renaissent soient les mêmes que ceux qui sont éteints.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, colors enjoy an absolute value whereas sounds are only relative.

De plus, chaque couleur est absolue, indépendante; au lieu que chaque son n'est pour nous que relatif et ne se distingue que par comparaison. Un son n'a par lui-même aucun caractère absolu qui le fasse reconnaître: il est grave ou aigu, fort ou doux, par rapport à un autre; en lui-même il n'est rien de tout cela . . .<sup>77</sup>

Visual stimuli, having just the opposite attributes, however, are subjected to other controls.

Mais les propriétés des couleurs ne consistent point en des rapports. Le jaune est jaune, indépendant du rouge et du bleu; partout il est sensible et reconnaissable; et, sitôt qu'on aura fixé l'angle de réfraction qui le donne, on sera sûr d'avoir le même jaune dans tous les temps.<sup>78</sup>

These variations are revealed or created by means of light; auditory impulses on the other hand, are transmitted only

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 402-403.

through motion which presupposes the existence of some animate object or creature. This essential difference also accounts for Rousseau's preference of music to painting, a choice which he assumes to be universal. The former tells us there is someone present who is producing it; this other person breathes into it his own sentiments and feelings which are transferred to us through what he is relating in melody. This field also enjoys the paradoxical advantage of being able to represent certain states, or conditions which cannot be reproduced in the other. Although its medium is sound, it can, nevertheless, indicate all the successive stages of peace and quiet from calm repose to almost absolute silence. While such things are impossible subjects for a canvas, they readily find expression in "tone pictures." The latter consequently offer much richer and more picturesque opportunities for the play of the human imagination and emotions.

Les couleurs ne sont pas dans les corps colorés, mais dans la lumière; pour qu'on voie un objet, il faut qu'il soit éclairé. Les sons ont aussi besoin d'un mobile, et pour qu'ils existent il faut que le corps sonore soit ébranlé . . .

On voit par là que la peinture est plus près de la nature et que la musique tient plus à l'art humain. On sent aussi que l'une intéresse plus que l'autre, précisément parce qu'elle rapproche plus l'homme de l'homme et nous donne toujours quelque idée de nos semblables. La peinture est souvent morte et inanimée; elle vous peut transporter au fond d'un désert; mais sitôt que des signes vocaux frappent votre oreille, ils vous annoncent un être semblable à vous . . ."<sup>9</sup>

The flexibility and adaptability of this art are revealed in its power to depict what cannot really be heard; yet its medium of expression is that of sound.

C'est un des plus grands avantages du musicien, de pouvoir peindre les choses qu'on ne sauroit entendre, tandis qu'il est impossible au peintre de représenter celles qu'on ne sauroit voir; et le plus grand prodige d'un art qui n'agit que par le mouvement est d'en pouvoir former jusqu'à l'image du repos. Le sommeil, le calme de la nuit, la solitude, et le silence même, entrent dans les tableaux de la musique . . . la musique agit plus intimement sur nous, en excitant par un sens des affections semblables à celles qu'on peut exciter par un autre; et, comme le rapport ne peut être sensible que l'impression ne soit forte, la peinture, dénuée de cette force, ne peut rendre à la musique les imitations que celle-ci tire d'elle."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 403.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

The secret of the fertility of imagery that is to be found in music lies in its ability not to paint external objects, situations, or scenes in themselves, but rather to arouse in us the sentiments and feelings we would experience, were we in a condition to observe all these things for ourselves.

. . . l'art du musicien consiste à substituer à l'image insensible de l'objet celle des mouvemens que sa présence excite dans le coeur du contemplateur. Non-seulement il agitera la mer, animera les flammes d'un incendie, fera couler les ruisseaux, tomber la pluie et grossir les torrens; mais il peindra l'horreur d'un désert affreux, rembrunira les murs d'une prison souterraine, calmera la tempête, rendra l'air tranquille et serein, et répandra de l'orchestre une fraîcheur nouvelle sur les bocages. Il ne représentera pas directement ces choses, mais il excitera dans l'âme les mêmes sentimens qu'on éprouve en les voyant.<sup>81</sup>

This constitutes the theoretical side of Rousseau's attitude toward sensations and the successive stages of their refinement in the fine arts and in their function in our lives. While he is speaking primarily from a technical point of view, one can readily appreciate how responsive he is himself to external stimuli. Here we see the man as he reveals himself in his dialectical writings, and we are able to follow the line of reasoning which brings him from the purely scientific to the aesthetic and moral application of this "new" theory, so rich in its implications and in its subsequent development. Rousseau occupies a definite place in this school of thought: his rôle would seem to be that of the connecting link between the abstract thinker and the man of letters, two different adherents to the principle, unrelated but not opposed. To judge from those parts of his works discussed above, it would appear that he falls naturally into this position of mediator, a function which is, furthermore, an important and necessary one and quite the logical outgrowth of the eager attention paid to this controversial doctrine.

Before closing the discussion of the adaptability of colors to functions comparable to those of music, I think it is interesting to note that the question has continued to evoke discussion in more recent times. M. Louis Favre in his *La Musique des couleurs*, Paris, 1900, maintains that such a transfer is not the absurdity that it appears to be at first glance. It is well within

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

the bounds of possibility to evolve, somehow, a system of expression, with certain fundamental considerations and rules to guide its development.<sup>82</sup> M. Favre feels that there is a future for this field and to judge from his suggestions, the instrument which he has in mind is not far removed from the short-lived *orgue des couleurs* of le Père Castel.<sup>83</sup> Conscious of the objections which can be made to many points in his theory, he is, nevertheless, convinced of its practicability.

He is also aware of the fact that his is not the first attempt to deal with the problem. Besides an earlier essay of his own, *La Vérité—Pensées*, written in 1889, he knows of other contributions to the history of the subject. The fruitless efforts of le Père Castel of a hundred and fifty years before his own time have not escaped his attention, nor is he surprised at the failure of the projected *machine aux couleurs*.<sup>84</sup> Despite the setbacks which have come its way, however, M. Favre is firmly convinced of a rich and brilliant future for the science of the *musique des couleurs*.

<sup>82</sup> L. Favre, *op. cit.*, p. 20 ff.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

## CHAPTER III

### NATURE AS ROUSSEAU OBSERVES IT

A peine ai-je employé huit jours à parcourir un pays qui demanderoit des années d'observation : mais outre que la neige me chasse, j'ai voulu revenir au devant du Courier qui m'apporte, j'espère, une de vos lettres. En attendant qu'elle arrive, je commence par vous écrire celle-ci, après laquelle j'en écrirai s'il est nécessaire une seconde pour répondre à la vôtre.

Je ne vous ferai point ici un détail de mon voyage et de mes remarques ; j'en ai fait une relation que je compte vous porter. Il faut réserver notre correspondance pour les choses qui nous touchent de plus près l'un et l'autre. Je me contenterai de vous parler de la situation de mon âme : il est juste de vous rendre compte de l'usage qu'on fait de votre bien.

J'étois parti, triste de mes peines, et consolé de votre joie ; ce qui me tenoit dans un certain état de langueur qui n'est pas sans charme pour un coeur sensible. Je gravissais lentement et à pied des sentiers assés rudes, conduit par un homme que j'avois pris pour être mon guide, et dans lequel durant toute la route j'ai trouvé plutôt un ami qu'un mercenaire. Je voulois rêver, et j'en étois toujours détourné par quelque spectacle inattendu. Tantôt d'immenses roches pendoient en ruines au dessus de ma tête. Tantôt de hautes et bruyantes cascades m'inondoient de leur épais brouillard. Tantôt un torrent éternel ouvroit à mes côtés un abîme dont les yeux n'osoient sonder la profondeur. Quelquefois je me perdois dans l'obscurité d'un bois touffu. Quelquefois en sortant d'un gouffre une agréable prairie réjouissoit tout à coup mes regards. Un mélange étonnant de la nature sauvage et de la nature cultivée, monstroit par tout la main des hommes, où l'on eut cru qu'ils n'avoient jamais pénétré : à côté d'une caverne on trouvoit des maisons ; on voyoit des pampres secs où l'on n'eût cherché que des ronces, des vignes dans des terres ébouleées, d'excellens fruits sur des rochers, et des champs dans des précipices.

Ce n'étoit pas seulement le travail des hommes qui rendoit ces pays étranges si bizarrement contrastés ; la nature sembloit encore prendre plaisir à s'y mettre en opposition avec elle-même, tant on la trouvoit différente en un même lieu sous divers aspects. Au levant les fleurs du printemps, au midi les fruits de l'automne, au nord les glaces de l'hiver : elle réunissoit toutes les saisons dans le même instant, tous les climats dans le même lieu, des terrains contraires sur le même sol, et formoit l'accord inconnu par tout ailleurs des productions des plaines et de celle des Alpes. Ajoutez à tout cela les illusions de l'optique, les pointes des monts différemment éclairées, le clair obscur du soleil et des ombres, et tous les accidens de lumière qui en résultoient le matin et le soir ; vous aurez quelque idée des scènes continuelles qui ne cessèrent d'attirer mon admiration, et qui sembloient m'être offertes en un vrai théâtre ;

car la perspective des monts étant verticale fraps les yeux tout à la fois et bien plus puissamment que celle des plaines qui ne se voit qu'obliquement, en fuyant, et dont chaque objet vous en cache un autre.

J'attribuai durant la première journée aux agrémens de cette variété le calme que je sentois renaître en moi. J'admirai l'empire qu'ont sur nos passions les plus vives les êtres les plus insensibles, et je méprisois la philosophie de ne pouvoir pas même autant sur l'âme qu'une suite d'objets inanimés. Mais cet état paisible ayant duré la nuit et augmenté le lendemain, je ne tardai pas de juger qu'il avoit encore quelque autre cause qui ne m'étoit pas connue. J'arrivai ce jour-là sur des montagnes les moins élevées, et parcourant ensuite leurs inégalités, sur celles des plus hautes qui étoient à ma portée. Après m'être promené dans les nuages, j'atteignois un séjour plus serein d'où l'on voit, dans la saison le tonnerre et l'orage se former au dessous de soi; image trop vaine de l'âme du sage, dont l'exemple n'exista jamais, ou n'existe qu'aux mêmes lieux d'où l'on en a tiré l'emblème.

Ce fut là que je démêlai sensiblement dans la pureté de l'air où je me trouvois, la véritable cause du changement de mon humeur, et du retour de cette paix intérieure que j'avois perdue depuis si longtems. En effet, c'est une impression générale qu'éprouvent tous les hommes, quoiqu'ils ne l'observent pas tous, que sur les hautes montagnes où l'air est pur et subtil, on se sent plus de facilité dans la respiration, plus de légèreté dans le corps, plus de sérénité dans l'esprit, les plaisirs y sont moins ardens, les passions plus modérées. Les méditations y prennent je ne sais quel caractère grand et sublime, proportionné aux objets qui nous frappent, je ne sais quelle volupté tranquille qui n'a rien d'âcre et de sensuel. Il semble qu'en s'élevant au dessus du séjour des hommes on y laisse tous les sentimens bas et terrestres, et qu'à mesure qu'on approche des régions éthérées l'âme contracte quelque chose de leur inaltérable pureté. On y est grave sans mélancolie, paisible sans indolence, content d'être et de penser: tous les desirs trop vifs s'émoussent; ils perdent cette pointe aiguë qui les rend douloureux, ils ne laissent au fond du coeur qu'une émotion légère et douce, et c'est ainsi qu'un heureux climat fait servir à la félicité de l'homme les passions qui font ailleurs son tourment. Je doute qu'aucune agitation violente, aucune maladie de vapeurs pût tenir contre un pareil séjour prolongé, et je suis surpris que des bains de l'air salubre et bien-faisant des montagnes ne soient pas un des grands remèdes de la médecine et de la morale.

Supposez les impressions réunies de ce que je viens de vous décrire, et vous aurez quelque idée de la situation délicieuse où je me trouvois. Imaginez la variété, la grandeur, la beauté de mille étonnans spectacles; le plaisir de ne voir autour de soi que des objets tout nouveaux, des oiseaux étranges, des plantes bizarres et inconnues, d'observer en quelque sorte une autre nature, et de se trouver dans un nouveau monde. Tout cela fait aux yeux un mélange inexprimable dont le charme

augmente encore par la subtilité de l'air qui rend les couleurs plus vives, les traits plus marqués, rapproche tous les points de vue; les distances paroissant moindres que dans les plaines, où l'épaisseur de l'air couvre la terre d'un voile, l'horizon présente aux yeux plus d'objets qu'il semble n'en pouvoir contenir: enfin, le spectacle a je ne sais quoi de magique, de surnaturel qui ravit l'esprit et les sens; on oublie tout, on s'oublie soi-même, on ne sait plus où l'on est.<sup>1</sup>

The next step in the study of Rousseau's attitude and method would seem to be the direct consultation of those of his works in which one would most naturally expect to find a careful interpretation of the sensationalistic theory, as he understands it. In this manner it may be determined to how great an extent he actually puts it into practice. It is particularly in his fictional or semi-fictional compositions that he has the opportunity to give it full development. In all branches of his story-telling, whether in a sentimental tale such as the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, or in autobiography, as in his *Confessions* and the *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire*, he has many opportunities to emphasize external stimuli, particularly as to the detail of scenes and landscapes. Theoretically, one has every reason to look for such an element in a predominating measure; practically, however, his observations yield other results.

It is true that there is frequent mention of pleasant sensory impulses in the works I have just mentioned; in the *Émile*, Rousseau reverts to their scientific importance in the growth and development of the child. Here he carries his thought to its logical conclusion, for his pupil comes, eventually, to take cognizance of the higher and finer things in life through these channels and to formulate the aesthetic and moral principles upon which they are founded. Aside from this, however, Rousseau seems to be little concerned with a thorough-going and penetrating analysis of physical perceptions. His numerous allusions made to them in passing serve, instead, another purpose in his technique of landscape description.

Upon close examination, Rousseau's method will be seen to follow that of Shaftesbury, which is already familiar to us.<sup>2</sup> In order to simplify our study of it, I think it perhaps well first to consider in detail one of his lengthier and most representative

<sup>1</sup> *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Mornet ed., Paris, 1925, v. II, pp. 75-80.

<sup>2</sup> See chapter I.



passages in this vein in order to determine its basic elements. I have selected one of the best known excerpts from the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, taken from Letter XXIII, Part I. It stands at the head of this chapter as one of the most illuminating and satisfactory of Rousseau's landscapes. In it, there appear not only many echoes of the earlier school, but also numerous indications of his personal reaction to the situation as well.

*A peine ai-je employé huit jours à parcourir un pays qui demanderoit des années d'observation*, Saint-Preux writes in his opening lines. He is aware of a richness and variety of detail, but his other preoccupations are too great to permit him to regard them closely. *Je ne vous ferai point ici un détail de mon voyage et de mes remarques*, he continues, for his chief concern is with himself. *Je me contenterai de vous parler de la situation de mon âme*, for, although he is in a new region, his own person claims his first attention and he takes notice of his surroundings only insofar as they bear a definite relationship to himself.

He continues in a strain which shows how the distraction afforded him by the external world sooner or later brings him back to those concerns which lie closest to his heart. Then there follows a description of the general neighborhood, written in the best didactic style. Saint-Preux takes care that we should perceive and appreciate those of its features which have made an impression upon him. He has an eye always for the balance, the combination, the interrelation of individual items. He points them out in succession in order that we might not miss something to which he ascribes a certain importance. The passage in its entirety is a demonstration not only of Rousseau's manner of looking upon nature, but also of the way in which he wishes us to see it, as well. Consequently, he proceeds in an orderly fashion, teaching us to observe it as a realm worthy of close inspection.

The major consideration of thinkers and philosophers both prior to, and during the age of Rousseau, is, of course, man. He wishes, however, to include an additional consideration, namely, man's relationship with his surroundings. His problem is thus two-fold: since he appreciates this situation, he wishes that others, that is, his readers, also be made aware of it.

*Tantôt d'immenses roches pendoient en ruines* introduces another section which extends to *Un mélange étonnant de la nature sauvage et de la nature cultivée*. He notices an intermingling of seemingly unrelated elements, as fascinating as it is surprising, as it reveals, to a certain extent, the modifying influence of man over nature. The two are not necessarily in conflict; it is rather that, in unison, they are capable of producing a result far more effective than either could create alone. The contrast between these features is further enhanced by Rousseau's balanced phrasing. The twice repeated *tantôt*, introducing three consecutive periods of gradually increased length establishes a rhythm and cadence that carry the reader along almost without his being aware of it; the reiteration of *quelquefois* in the next two sentences, under similar circumstances, strengthens this impression. The items which have been singled out for specific notation blend in a *mélange étonnant*, the inevitable result of their juxtaposition. Thus there arises out of apparent confusion a pleasing unity and coordination.

A continuation of the same process in the remainder of the last sentence of this paragraph completes the picture. From *à côté d'une caverne* to *les précipices* there is revealed, through enumeration, the close observation of one who is concerned with careful analysis: *cavernes, maisons; pampres secs, ronces; vignes, terres éboulées; fruits, rochers; champs, précipices*.

The passage continues in the same vein. As interpreter, so to speak, of the material at hand, Rousseau seems to take great pleasure in the balance and counterbalance of the individual features of this wonderfully rich scene. The next part deals with the contrast and opposition, yet interrelationship of so many items which one finds *en un même lieu sous divers aspects*. This incongruity is only illusory, however, for the total effect is one of an *accord inconnu*. He sees order and regularity in what might appear, at first glance, to be completely disorganized.

The tone of exposition is emphasized by the following *ajoutez à tout cela* and *vous aurez quelque idée*: he is teaching one to look upon nature sympathetically and intelligently. Consequently, the image which one has of it is entirely satisfactory in its synthesis of seemingly unrelated elements.

To judge from the impressions recorded in this letter and the rhythmical phrasing in which he retells them, one's first reaction might be to designate Rousseau as a close observer of nature, acutely conscious of the interplay and relationship between its component parts. Furthermore, one has reason to look for this appreciation in Rousseau, for he is an advocate of the scientific principle which is based upon the proper interpretation of external stimuli, namely, sensationalism. In the selection which I have given, he has shown himself capable of critical analysis and responsive to the coordination which he perceives. This he has done in his manner of writing of it: he seems to be thinking aloud in his swinging, at times almost metrical prose, reflecting in his use of language the orderly combination of the units which constitute a complex whole.

He continues in this strain, however, only so long as he maintains the rôle of demonstrator. As soon as he becomes aware of his own personality in the face of such a multitude of details, he abandons this technique for another. Continuing with our same quotation from Letter XXIII, we are able to follow the successive stages of this transition. It becomes more and more evident as Saint-Preux elaborates upon his discussion of the region to which he has been banished. Experiencing a different kind of reaction, he now adopts another tone. Consequently, in the picture which he is drawing of the scene before him, the emphasis shifts from that which has claimed his attention up until now to himself. As he moves into the foreground, his notations of details fuse into an entirely new sentiment.

In the course of his remarks on the landscape, he has become aware of a subtle change in his own *humeur*. This he attributes directly to the effect of what he has been studying so closely. He is now brought to consider his own position; he now turns from his consideration of individual items to the enjoyment of the whole. *Ce fut là que je démêlai la véritable cause* indicates a lingering interest in seeking cause and effect. Immediately after, however, he becomes absorbed in something else.

He explains this new attraction in the sentences which follow, beginning with *En effet, c'est une impression générale qu'éprouvent tous les hommes*, and extending to *rien d'âcre et de sensuel*. Here is the secret of his reaction to it: upon these heights, he is

no longer concerned with what is external to himself. He is conscious only of an indistinct, blurred image of all the things he was regarding so carefully but a moment ago. The vague, yet agreeable state of mind which results from this has *je ne sais quel caractère grand et sublime*; he experiences *je ne sais quelle volupté tranquille*, which is far more appealing to him than any other possible situation.

From this point on, he takes little or no interest in determining the sources of specific sensations. He derives greater contentment from the *je ne sais quoi* which alone animates nature for him. This is a fundamental characteristic in Rousseau, for he has recourse to it again and again in both the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and his biographical works. He has moved on from concentrating solely on man to considering him in relation to his surroundings, to nature in the midst of which he lives. His attention still remains divided, still clinging predominantly to himself, to the human element in the picture. The closing sentences of this paragraph illustrate this two-fold concern, with a final reiteration of the confused, yet exquisite sentiments which arise in him as he contemplates the beauties of the external world.

Starting from *Il semble qu'en s'élevant au dessus du séjour des hommes*, he carries us along, once again, with a smooth measure, introducing subtle contrasts, balancing expressions and images in a rhythmical sequence of phrases. *Séjour des hommes, sentimens bas et terrestres; régions éthérées, leur inaltérable pureté*, establish a definite antithesis between the lowly and the lofty in both the geographical and the spiritual world. The effect upon the observer is one of quiet peacefulness: *grave, paisible, content d'être et de penser, émotion légère et douce*. These are the influences bearing down upon the observer from without; at the very end, however, Rousseau returns to his major consideration, man. Descending to the plane of the practical, he suggests the adaptation of such scenic wonders to the treatment of human disorders. As his chief concern lies in this general direction, it is not surprising that he should reflect upon the possible benefit which the individual may derive from his environment.

The final paragraph is a summary of all that has gone before.

Rousseau begins once again as the analyst, seeking out the component parts of that which he is describing, and eager that his audience should have an equally vivid impression of them. From *Supposez les impressions réunies*, he recapitulates that to which he has devoted the three preceding pages, and in this condensed form we also see his technique, his method of approach to the situation. Enumeration of specific items: *objets tout nouveaux, oiseaux étranges, plantes bizarres*, reveals his awareness of them. His personal reaction to them, however, is a confusion of sentiment, as pleasant as it is indistinct, and undefined because its effect is too agreeable to be subjected to closer study. Mr. Rice in his "Rousseau and the Poetry of Nature in XVIIIth century France," summarizes this aspect of Rousseau's writing.

In this kind of lyrical generalization there is rarely anything of the real world, rarely anything solidly outside the speaker, and none of that English faithfulness of detail which Rousseau's successors were to try in vain to catch. Here it is sensation remembered for itself and partly lost, . . .<sup>3</sup>

This is evident from his next observation: as for himself, he finds all these sensations bewildering, for they create *un mélange inexprimable, a je ne sais quoi de magique, de surnaturel* which is enchanting. He has no desire to penetrate further into the secrets of nature's charm. Always, Rousseau's chief interest lies in the human element in a given situation. For either himself, or his characters, the external world is one whose fascination consists in its ability to stimulate that state of mind which they all seek: reverie. Aimless and vague in itself, it is what they desire most, and they turn to the source from which it derives only insofar as it helps them to this end.

If this is the essence of Rousseau's general attitude, it is not difficult to determine the remaining factors which appear in his technique. I think it well to indicate them at this point, in order to facilitate the discussion of the selected passages which are to follow. They all illustrate in one way or another some particular phase of Rousseau's reaction to his surroundings.

<sup>3</sup> R. A. Rice, "Rousseau and the Poetry of Nature in XVIIIth century France," *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages*, v. 6, nos. 3-4, 1925, p. 47.

Sometimes several of its most important elements appear within the limits of a given excerpt.

The logical sequel to his predilection for reverie is, of course, that once he has found the conditions which are most favorable to it, he is no longer concerned with anything else. He now turns his attention wholly upon himself. Hence, the simplest and most striking details escape him, sensations as such remain unperceived. Indications of colors, of the effect of light and shadow, of odors, sounds and touch are quite overlooked; he is utterly unconscious of what is around him. Thus we have in Rousseau the combination of a theoretical and scientific interest in the influence of external impulses in human development,<sup>4</sup> coupled with a complete shift of attention when he is concerned with himself as an individual.

Since this is the case, one is prepared for the affirmation of the fact that there are relatively very few and very simple sensory notations in Rousseau's descriptions of nature. Although he is a careful observer as long as he is interested in his surroundings, his tone and his method change when he comes to consider himself. And so it is that Rousseau reveals the two sides of his personality.

A survey of the following selections from the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, the *Confessions*, the *Reveries* and the *Émile* will bring us to these general conclusions. Up to a certain point, Rousseau is closely observant of all that he sees around him; furthermore, he is eager that others should also appreciate it. To this end, he assumes, at times, a didactic manner of exposition, pointing out those elements which he considers important, indicating the balance between corresponding features, the contrast between dissimilar ones, or the general effect of the combination of many. He also reveals a genuine concern for the practicability of certain items, for he seeks the convenience or adaptability of things for human use. To this extent, he reflects the principles of the Shaftesbury school of thought.

This brings him to the consideration of man and his place in nature. This is the topic which is dearest and closest to him; at this point there is a perceptible shift of emphasis in his exposition. Surfeited, as it were, with all these details, his final im-

<sup>4</sup> See chapter II.

pression is one of an agreeable vagueness from which there emanates a magical peacefulness. This dreaminess is a state of being whose voluptuousness, to use his own expression,<sup>5</sup> he is in no way inclined to resist. On the contrary, he solicits it with reckless abandon, for here, and here only does he seem to find happiness. Small wonder, then, that he fails to notice, as separate units, the impulses striking upon his senses. In their place, he offers the sympathetic reader a sort of soliloquy whose charm and appeal are unique in themselves.

He achieves this effect partly through his use of language. That his working vocabulary contains little that is striking or unusual has already been pointed out in numerous studies.<sup>6</sup> The secret of it must consequently lie in the vigor and vitality which he succeeds in instilling into his essentially simple phraseology. Balance and rhythm play a large part not only in sentence-structure, but also in his sequence of ideas as well. As a musician, he possesses instinctively a certain feeling for harmony and cadence which find spontaneous expression in both fields of endeavor. These stylistic traits have also been the subject of investigations.<sup>7</sup> They appear to a varying degree, depending upon his own sentiments of the moment. At all events, they give frequent evidence of certain feeling for contrast and movement and, at times, of a clearly distinguishable metrical form.

Turning now directly to the text of Rousseau, I think a systematic survey of his most representative landscapes will disclose the basic elements not only of his personal reaction, but

<sup>5</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. II, p. 78; cf. above, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. F. Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900*, Paris, 1932; A. François, "Les Provincialismes de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, v. III, 1907; F. Gohin, *Les Transformations de la langue française pendant la deuxième moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1903; also, G. Lanson, *L'Art de la prose*, Paris, 1908; E. Faguet, *Rousseau artiste*, Paris, 1910; J. Füsser, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Sprache Rousseaus*, Leipzig, 1909, and R. A. Rice, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Brunot, *op. cit.*; S. Coculesco, *Essai sur les rythmes toniques du français*, Paris, 1925; Faguet, *op. cit.*; Lanson, *op. cit.*; P.-M. Masson, "Contribution à l'étude de la prose métrique dans la *Nouvelle Héloïse*," *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, v. V, 1909.

also of his method: what he sees and how he sees it. The lengthy quotation from the *Nouvelle Héloïse* which I discussed at the beginning of this chapter gives some indication of practically every aspect of Rousseau's point of view, from his consideration of nature as a world external to himself to his complete forgetfulness of its very existence in his search for reverie. His analytical and didactic approach is clearly demonstrated in another well-known paragraph in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Part IV, Letter XVII.<sup>8</sup>

Saint-Preux returns to his retreat in the mountains, where, in the first days of his love, he suffered in tormenting exile. Later, he revisits the place, accompanied by Julie after their long separation. This has put barriers of even greater insurmountability between them than there had been before, for she is now Madame de Wolmar. His former haunt is rife with memories for him; he cannot come among these rocks and hear these torrents without again experiencing, involuntarily, his passion of old. First of all, however, they go out upon the lake from the center of which one enjoys a sweeping panorama of the shoreline with fields and mountains, streams and verdure, the whole forming a neat and pleasing sight.

Là [au milieu du lac] j'expliquois à Julie toutes les parties du superbe horizon qui nous entourait. Je lui montrois de loin les embouchures du Rhône dont l'impétueux cours s'arrête tout à coup au bout d'un quart de lieue, et semble craindre de souiller de ses eaux bourbeuses le cristal azuré du lac. Je lui faisois observer les redans des montagnes, dont les angles correspondans et parallèles forment dans l'espace qui les sépare un lit digne du fleuve qui le remplit. En l'écartant de nos côtes j'aimois à lui faire admirer les riches et charmantes rives du pays de Vaud, où la quantité des villes, l'innombrable foule du peuple, les coteaux verdoyans et parés de toutes parts forment un tableau ravissant; où la terre par tout cultivée et par tout féconde offre au laboureur, au pâtre, au vigneron le fruit assuré de leurs peines, que ne dévore point l'avidité publicain. Puis lui montrant le Chablais sur la côte opposée, pays non moins favorisé de la nature, et qui n'offre pourtant qu'un spectacle de misère, je lui faisois sensiblement distinguer les différens effets des deux gouvernemens, pour la richesse le nombre et le bonheur des hommes. C'est ainsi, lui disois-je que la terre ouvre son sein fertile et prodigue ses trésors aux heureux peuples qui la cultivent pour eux-mêmes. Elle semble sourire et s'animer au doux spectacle de la liberté; elle aime à nourrir des hommes.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, v. III, pp. 279-280.



Au contraire les tristes mazes, la bruyère et les ronces qui couvrent une terre à demi-déserte annoncent de loin qu'un maître absent y domine, et qu'elle donne à regret à des esclaves quelques maigres productions dont ils ne profitent pas.<sup>9</sup>

This scene is described in Rousseau's best didactic manner. He evinces a genuine concern that the uninitiated observer should not miss any of its most salient features. *J'expliquois à Julie toutes les parties du superbe horizon* shows not only Saint-Preux's awareness of its beauty, but also his eagerness to share it. He points out the mouth of the Rhône, he calls Julie's attention to the formation of the mountains, he derives great pleasure from her admiration of the fertile and prosperous Vaud country. Its air of well-being, of busy and populous towns, is created by the aggregate of many individual features, which in a final *résumé*, "presents a charming picture."

That is one side of the lake; the other offers a less happy sight, in which Saint-Preux shows equal interest, for he finds in it a noteworthy contrast with what has gone before. He carefully points this out to Julie, in order that she may fully appreciate his remarks to the effect that nature itself shows its responsiveness to the care which man bestows upon it. This brings us back to Rousseau's chief concern: the interrelation between the two, for, under the proper circumstances, nature seems to exert itself to repay those who tend it. This leads to the discussion of political economy which follows, for the emphasis has now passed from the immediate scene before the lovers, to the human element which is represented in it. M. Mornet, as editor of the text, does not fail to comment upon the exactitude not only of Rousseau's observations, but also of the interpretation which he gives to them.<sup>10</sup>

With regard to the language in which Rousseau relates this episode, the demonstrative note again predominates: *expliquer . . . toutes les parties, montrer, faire observer, faire admirer, les coteaux verdoyans . . . forment un tableau ravissant, faire distinguer*. There is a hint of the technical in his reference to the *redans des montagnes*, with an indication of the angles and channels which they form. M. Mornet comments upon the

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 280, note 3.

word *redans*, tracing Rousseau's use of it back to a earlier interest in "geometry and fortifications."<sup>11</sup>

There are also several other examples of contrast and comparison in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* which may well be mentioned here. One, for instance, reflects the difference noticeable in a given spot due to the changing seasons; another seems to echo the sentiments of a person under the influence of a great emotion.

The first is an account of Saint-Preux's retreat in the mountains across from Julie's home. Later, when he takes her there, in the summer-time, the whole region is animated with a new spirit. During the winter, when everything was cold and dead, this seemed the most suitable place to hide his love. The little plot is now covered with grass and flowers; at the time of his former visits to it, it presented quite another picture.

On n'y voyoit alors ni ces fruits ni ces ombrages: La verdure et les fleurs ne tapissoient point ces compartimens; le cours de ces ruisseaux n'en formoit point les divisions; ces oiseaux n'y faisoient point entendre leurs ramages, le vorace épervier, le corbeau funèbre et l'aigle terrible des alpes faisoient seuls retentir de leurs cris ces cavernes; d'immenses glaces pendoient à tous ces rochers; des festons de neige étoient le seul ornement de ces arbres; tout respiroit ici les rigueurs de l'hiver et l'horreur des frimats. . .<sup>12</sup>

This whole passage illustrates the modifications which have taken place since last he was here: plants, trees, fruits, streams, birds, now offer a spectacle of which there had been not the slightest trace so long ago. At that time, its very atmosphere had served to increase his feeling of cold lifelessness; now everything is flourishing, imbued with an irresistible urge to live.

The following quotation reveals still more clearly the personal element in a sympathetic landscape. This comes about, of course, through the sentiments of the observer, who sees in it an echo of his own mood.

Je trouve la campagne plus riante, la verdure plus fraîche et plus vive, l'air plus pur, le Ciel plus serain; le chant des oiseaux semble avoir plus de tendresse et de volupté; le murmure des eaux inspire une langueur plus amoureuse; la vigne en fleurs exhale au loin de plus doux parfums; un charme secret embellit tous les objets ou fascine mes sens,

<sup>11</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 280, note 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, v. III, p. 286.

on diroit que la terre se pare pour former à ton heureux amant un lit nuptial digne de la beauté qu'il adore et du feu qui le consume.<sup>13</sup>

External objects take on a different appearance for the responsive lover. All that he sees, hears, smells or perceives in general, the *charme secret* of a multitude of sensations, impresses itself upon him, enriching his emotional experience by virtue of their appeal.

M. Mornet finds in passages such as this a reflection of a tendency which is no longer new at the time of publication of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. In addition to his introductory remarks to this edition of the novel and his closer study of the movement as a whole in his *Romantisme en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1912, he adds a supplementary note in connection with the quotation I have just given.

Le thème n'est pas nouveau. Mme Riccoboni, . . . unissait déjà, avant que Rousseau ne publiât la *Nouvelle Héloïse*, les charmes de l'amour et ceux des choses: 'le charme inexprimable attaché à sa présence semble s'étendre sur l'univers et rendre tout plus aimable et plus riant; l'absence au contraire sème l'insipidité sur tout.—Un charme inconnu se répandit sur tout ce qui m'environnait; les objets changèrent à mes yeux; ils devinrent plus riants, plus aimables; je vis la nature s'embellir autour de moi.' (*Lettres de Mistriss Fanni Butlerd* (1757); *Lettres de Milady Juliette Catesby* (1759) dans les *Oeuvres* (29<sup>ter</sup>), t. I, 87 et VI, 50). Inversement Mme de V \* \* \* écrit, dans un roman de Bastide, quand elle croit n'être plus aimée: 'toute la nature est anéantie pour moi.' *Lettres d'amour du chevalier de* \* \* \*, Londres, s. n. (1752), t. IV, pp. 26-35.<sup>14</sup>

Rousseau's technique is always more or less the same, whether he or one of his characters is telling the story. The foregoing discussion has dealt with selections from the *Nouvelle Héloïse*; the *Réveries* also offer several illustrations of his method. Always one finds an appreciation of the contrasts, the balance, and thus the harmony which nature displays when left unmolested and free to develop in its own way. His description of the "lac de Bienne" is perhaps one of the finest examples of this sentiment which we find in all his work. He finds it particularly satisfying, because he sees here the perfect accord of unity and order which constitutes the basis of all beauty. Here earth, sky and water meet in one place, silence and solitude bring opportunities

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, v. II, p. 138.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138, note 1.

for the sweet reveries from which he derives so much pleasure. Simple and inconspicuous, it offers a peaceful retreat where he would have liked to spend the rest of his days.

Les rives du lac de Bienne sont plus sauvages et romantiques que celles du lac de Genève, parce que les rochers et les bois y bordent l'eau de plus près; mais elles ne sont pas moins riantes. S'il y a moins de culture de champs et de vignes, moins de villes et de maisons, il y a aussi plus de verdure naturelle, plus de prairies, d'asiles ombragés de bocages, des contrastes plus fréquens et des accidens plus rapprochés. Comme il n'y a pas sur ces heureux bords de grandes routes commodes pour les voitures, le pays est peu fréquenté par les voyageurs, mais il est intéressant pour des contemplatifs solitaires qui aiment à s'enivrer à loisir des charmes de la nature, et à se recueillir dans un silence que ne trouble aucun autre bruit que le cri des aigles, le ramage entrecoupé de quelques oiseaux, et le roulement des torrens qui tombent de la montagne. Ce beau bassin, d'une forme presque ronde, enferme dans son milieu deux petites îles, . . .<sup>15</sup>

The theme of the entire passage is one of comparison and contrast, for Rousseau has discovered that if the lake and its shores have less of one feature, they are blessed with something else equally desirable to a greater degree. This relative point of view appears from the very first sentence, for its banks are *plus sauvages et romantiques* than those of Lake Geneva. He continues in this strain: *plus près, pas moins riantes; moins de culture de champs* and *moins de villes* are offset by *plus de verdure naturelle, plus de prairies*. The whole region exhibits a freshness of appeal which is unspoiled by human contact. In this instance, it would seem as though nature had avoided adapting herself to man, for there are no routes to accommodate the general public. This, on the other hand, brings its own reward to the true lover of such sights: *le contemplatif solitaire* who seeks the pleasures of leisurely dreaming in an atmosphere whose silence is all but complete. The birds and waterfalls inject a note of animation which prevents the wanderer from feeling entirely alone and isolated.

The description of the lake with its two islands continues in a similar vein. Variety is everywhere present, and contributes to the charm of the spot, for it offers a synthesis of all the factors making for beauty.

<sup>15</sup> *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire, Oeuvres, v. IX, p. 359.*

L'île [de Saint-Pierre], dans sa petitesse, est tellement variée dans ses terrains et ses aspects, qu'elle offre toutes sortes de sites, et souffre toutes sortes de culture. On y trouve des champs, des vignes, des bois, des vergers, de gras pâturages ombragés de bosquets, et bordés d'arbrisseaux de toute espèce, dont le bord des eaux entretient la fraîcheur; une haute terrasse plantée de deux rangs d'arbres borde l'île dans sa longueur, . . .<sup>16</sup>

Note once again the familiar technique: *variée dans ses terrains, toutes sortes de sites, toutes sortes de culture, arbrisseaux de toute espèce*. The *deux rangs d'arbres* give the effect of a frame which surrounds and completes the picture.

The quiet life of seeking herbs and contemplating unspoiled nature which Rousseau leads here is, for him, a state of unmitigated bliss. He enjoys rowing and boating; he derives equal pleasure from day-dreaming on the shore whence he is able to survey the glorious panorama of the lake spread out before him.

Quand le lac agité ne me permettoit pas la navigation, je passois mon après-midi à parcourir l'île, en herborisant à droite et à gauche; m'asseyant tantôt dans les réduits les plus riens et les plus solitaires pour y rêver à mon aise, tantôt sur les terrasses et les tertres, pour parcourir des yeux le superbe et ravissant coup d'oeil du lac et de ses rivages, couronnés d'un côté par des montagnes prochaines, et de l'autre élargis en riches et fertiles plaines, dans lesquelles la vue s'étendoit jusqu'aux montagnes bleuâtres plus éloignées qui la bornoient.<sup>17</sup>

Rousseau's activities on the island also reflect his numerous interests. He turns from one thing to another, as the fancy strikes him, always conscious of the multiplicity of aspects which the region can offer. *Réduits les plus riens et les plus solitaires, terrasses, tertres, d'un côté . . . des montagnes prochaines, de l'autre élargis en . . . plaines, montagnes . . . plus éloignées qui la bornoient* are some of the many attractions of the locality. Moreover, its boundaries serve to delimit it and make it a unit within itself.

Rousseau thus reveals a love of order and balance and rhythm in the beauties of the external world. His reaction to them is two-fold: he first notices numerous individual features, drifting subsequently into reverie and day-dreaming. On the other hand, he sometimes rouses to find that he has been so absorbed in the

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

second that he has completely failed to give any attention to the first. He then proceeds to do so in his usual analytical manner. The following passages are fine illustrations of this, and should be given here in order that we may acquire a still greater insight into his sentiments as well as his style.

Perhaps one of the most striking examples of careful enumeration comes in the *Rêveries*, when Rousseau writes of a botanical excursion he once made in the neighborhood of Robaila.

Je me rappellerai toute ma vie une herborisation que je fis un jour du côté de la Robaila, montagne du justicier Clerc. J'étois seul, je m'enfonçai dans les anfractuosités de la montagne; et, de bois en bois, de roche en roche, je parvins à un réduit si caché, que je n'ai vu de ma vie un aspect plus sauvage. De noirs sapins entremêlés de hêtres prodigieux, dont plusieurs tombés de vieillesse et entrelacés les uns dans les autres, fermoient ce réduit de barrières impénétrables; quelques intervalles que laissoit cette sombre enceinte n'offroient au delà que des roches coupées à pic, et d'horribles précipices que je n'osois regarder qu'en me couchant sur le ventre. Le duc, la chevêche et l'orfraie, faisoient entendre leurs cris dans les fentes de la montagne; quelques petits oiseaux rares, mais familiers, tempéroient cependant l'horreur de cette solitude; là, je trouvai la dentaire *heptaphyllos*, le *cyclamen*, le *nidus avis*, le grand *laserpitium*, et quelques autres plantes qui me charmèrent et m'amusèrent longtemps; mais insensiblement dominé par la forte impression des objets, j'oubliai la botanique et les plantes, je m'assis sur des oreillers de *lycopodium* et de mousses, et je me mis à rêver plus à mon aise, en pensant que j'étois là dans un refuge ignoré de tout l'univers, où les persécuteurs ne me déterreroient pas.  
 . . . <sup>18</sup>

He notices trees, *sapins*, *hêtres*; rock formations, *coupés à pic*, *précipices*; birds, *duc*, *chevêche*, *orfraie*, also *quelques petits oiseaux rares, mais familiers*; and finally, plants. These he indicates by their Latin names, in his search for the utmost precision. It is a question why he should use these technical terms in such a context, for they mean little or nothing to any but the specialist in the field. He is so preoccupied with their classification that he does not see them as brilliant and delicate flowers, which it would be possible to describe in glowing terms.

His *Lettres élémentaires sur la botanique* (1771-1773) are written in a similar strain. They are essentially for the beginner (he had one in mind when he wrote them), and are

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 380.

consequently an attempt to popularize some of the fundamentals of botany. The air of scientific inquiry which he maintains in them is comparable to that which we see in the quotation I have just given. Also, his *Notes sur la botanique de Regnault* and his *Dictionnaire de botanique*, fragmentary though it is, attest further his interest in the subject. His tone always remains scholarly, with no attempt to present examples in terms of color and details of form. Can it be that he is so absorbed in other considerations that he fails entirely to see these?

Whatever the reason may be, Rousseau is quite himself in the concluding remarks of this passage. After having regarded closely the beauties of nature, he yields to their charm, and putting aside even his learned pursuits, gladly welcomes the sweet reverie which they invariably induce.

The rhythm of certain parts of the selection contributes to the effect of gentle and soothing peacefulness. *J'étois seul, de bois en bois, de roche en roche, réduit si caché, je n'ai vu de ma vie un aspect plus sauvage*, present once again the idea of contrast, coupled with a feeling of slight movement. The whole creates a mood of dreaminess through *la forte impression des objets*; a moment ago they had attracted his closest scrutiny.

There is also another example of the careful notation of flowers in the *Rêveries*. He mentions them in connection with his brief visit to the island of Saint-Pierre.

D'autres fois, au lieu de m'écartier en pleine eau, je me plaisais à côtoyer les verdoyantes rives de l'île, dont les limpides eaux et les ombrages frais m'ont souvent engagé à m'y baigner. Mais une de mes navigations les plus fréquentes étoit d'aller de la grande à la petite île, d'y débarquer et d'y passer l'après-dînée, tantôt à des promenades très-éclaircies au milieu des marceaux, des bourdaines, des persicaires, des arbrisseaux de toute espèce, et tantôt m'établissant au sommet d'un tertre sablonneux, couvert de gazon, de serpolet, de fleurs, même d'esparcette et de trèfles qu'on y avoit vraisemblablement semés autrefois, . . .<sup>19</sup>

The world of nature has had an irresistible appeal for Rousseau ever since his earliest years. It is in his *Confessions* and *Rêveries* that he dwells particularly upon the secret of it. Recalling his first contact with it, he realizes its importance and influence in his life and career. Sent to Bossey with a cousin, he

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

learns something of a routine different from that in which he had spent his time reading novels with his father at Geneva.

. . . à Bossey, le travail me fit aimer les jeux qui lui servoient de relâche. La campagne étoit pour moi si nouvelle, que je ne pouvois me lasser d'en jouir. Je pris pour elle un goût si vif, qu'il n'a jamais pu s'éteindre. Le souvenir des jours heureux que j'y ai passés m'a fait regretter son séjour et ses plaisirs dans tous les âges, jusqu'à celui qui m'y a ramené.<sup>20</sup>

As a middle-aged man, his health failing, he still turns to nature for the diversion and amusement which it has to offer him. His study of botany remains a leisurely process, however, often leading him into the next stage of his cult, that of day-dreaming in the mountains or by the lake. This is perhaps one of the most touching features of his love for the out-of-doors. Highly sensitive, he is also given to musing and reflection, and nothing starts him on these flights of fancy more quickly or more surely than some secluded nook or the end of a trail to which a busy "lesson" has brought him.<sup>21</sup>

Errer nonchalamment dans les bois et dans la campagne, prendre machinalement çà et là, tantôt une fleur, tantôt un rameau, brouter mon foin presque au hasard, observer mille et mille fois les mêmes choses, et toujours avec le même intérêt, parce que je les oubliois toujours, étoit de quoi passer l'éternité sans pouvoir m'ennuyer un moment.<sup>22</sup>

This is the key to Rousseau's situation. He finds in surroundings such as these innumerable objects of interest. In fact, there are so many that he studies none of them in detail. Although he observes them closely when he wishes to point them out to another, he prefers not to do so when he is alone. *Errer*, in itself, indicates a vagueness of purpose and a lack of concentration; *nonchalamment*, *machinalement*, *tantôt . . . tantôt*, *au hasard*, *mille et mille fois* all contribute to the picture which he gives of the delights of aimless wandering. *Observer les mêmes choses, toujours avec le même intérêt, je les oubliois toujours*, these are the things that appeal to him most strongly,

<sup>20</sup> *Confessions*, *Oeuvres*, v. VIII, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. A. Monglond, *Histoire intérieure du préromantisme français de l'abbé Prévost à Joubert: le héros préromantique*, Grenoble, 1929, pp. 178-181.

<sup>22</sup> *Confessions*, v. IX, p. 71.



and here I think we have the secret of his love for nature. Indeterminate ramblings have their attractions, they bring before him the same things repeatedly. He is at liberty to study them as much or as little as he wishes. Free from any serious ulterior motive, he makes no effort to remember what he has seen; thus he derives a never-ending pleasure from seeing familiar plants many times over.

Basically, his is not a scientific interest in the field, although he seems, at times, to take his botany in earnest. While he never presents a flower to us in terms of color and other distinguishing features, he occasionally takes care to name it as to species and genus. This attitude is rare, however, for he finds casual glimpses, a synthesis of impressions which blend and mingle with one another, to be more agreeable and diverting. As a result, there is practically no accent on details of a pictorial quality in his descriptions. Specific notations are usually lacking, for he enjoys a situation as a whole more than the study of its individual aspects.

It is under these conditions that he finds the greatest inspiration and energy. He regrets not having recorded his sentiments and experiences as a young vagabond, for he realizes that whatever animation and appeal his works may have is due in great measure to this influence. What was an arresting attraction for him at that time has since assumed the proportions of a veritable passion.

La chose que je regrette le plus dans les détails de ma vie dont j'ai perdu la mémoire est de n'avoir pas fait des journaux de mes voyages. Jamais je n'ai tant pensé, tant existé, tant vécu, tant été moi, si j'ose ainsi dire, que dans ceux que j'ai faits seul et à pied. La marche a quelque chose qui anime et avive mes idées: je ne puis presque penser quand je reste en place; il faut que mon corps soit en branle pour y mettre mon esprit. La vue de la campagne, la succession des aspects agréables, le grand air, le grand appétit, la bonne santé que je gagne en marchant, la liberté du cabaret, l'éloignement de tout ce qui me fait sentir ma dépendance, de tout ce qui me rappelle à ma situation, tout cela dégage mon âme, me donne une plus grande audace de penser, me jette en quelque sorte dans l'immensité des êtres pour les combiner, les choisir, me les approprier à mon gré, sans gêne et sans crainte. Je dispose en maître de la nature entière; mon cœur, errant d'objet en objet, s'unit, s'identifie à ceux qui le flattent, s'entoure d'images charmantes, s'enivre de sentimens délicieux. Si pour les fixer je m'amuse à les décrire en moi-même, quelle vigueur de pinceau, quelle fraîcheur de

coloris, quelle énergie d'expression je leur donne! On a, dit-on, trouvé de tout cela dans mes ouvrages, quoique écrits vers le déclin de mes ans. Ah! si l'on eût vu ceux de ma première jeunesse, ceux que j'ai faits durant mes voyages, ceux que j'ai composés et que je n'ai jamais écrits! <sup>23</sup>

He finds, indeed, that he is at his best only when he is at liberty to wander in the woods: he cannot write either at command or at will. He must seek his impulse from the out-of-doors.

Je n'ai jamais pu rien faire la plume à la main vis-à-vis d'une table et de mon papier; c'est à la promenade, au milieu des rochers et des bois, c'est la nuit dans mon lit . . . que j'écris dans mon cerveau. . . . <sup>24</sup>

This never-failing stimulation functions in a very simple way. It consists of a succession of pleasant observations, related or not, as the case may be, which combine to create a full and rich experience. Walking is movement; while his body is in motion, so is his mind, and it is only then that he is conscious of the full power of his energies. *La vue de la campagne, la succession des aspects agréables, le grand air, le grand appétit, la bonne santé*, together with the train of thought which they inspire, *tout cela dégage mon âme*. . . . Working in unison, these forces bring about a feeling of well-being in which his imagination soars to even greater heights. In his selection and combination of factors drawn from *l'immensité des êtres*, he proudly disposes *en maître de la nature entière*. In this manner of wandering aimlessly from one object to another, searching for those which appeal most to him, uniting them according to his own fancy, he fashions a world of his own in which to live.

L'aurore un matin me parut si belle, que, . . . je me hâtai de gagner la campagne pour voir lever le soleil. Je goûtai ce plaisir dans tout son charme; c'étoit la semaine après la Saint-Jean. La terre, dans sa plus grande parure, étoit couverte d'herbes et de fleurs; les rossignols, presque à la fin de leur ramage, sembloient se plaire à le renforcer; tous les oiseaux, faisant en concert leurs adieux au printemps, chantoient la naissance d'un beau jour d'été, . . . <sup>25</sup>

This is another reminiscence from his youthful days. Even at that time, it was *tout le charme* of a given situation which arrested his attention. The scene is a brilliant one, especially with the contribution of the birds *en concert*. Once again, we

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, v. VIII, p. 115.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

see that it is the general impression which remains in his mind, as he reflects upon it in later years. When, occasionally, he stops to consider the source of so much beauty, he confesses to a *fraîcheur de coloris*, an *énergie d'expression*, with which he paints them; this, however, takes place only in his imagination, for he does not share it with his reader.

There comes a time, this general vagueness notwithstanding, when Rousseau pauses to ask himself why he should feel such an urgent longing for nature. He seeks to determine the source of its appeal.

Je loge au milieu de Paris: en sortant de chez moi je soupire après la campagne et la solitude; mais il faut l'aller chercher . . . loin, . . . Le moment où j'échappe au cortège des méchants est délicieux, et sitôt que je me vois sous les arbres, au milieu de la verdure, je crois me voir dans le paradis terrestre, et je goûte un plaisir interne aussi vif que si j'étois le plus heureux des mortels.<sup>26</sup>

What is this *plaisir interne*? It springs from the interplay of external factors and one's reaction to them.

. . . un instinct . . . me fit, pour la première fois, détailler le spectacle de la nature, que je n'avois guère contemplé jusqu'alors qu'en masse et dans son ensemble.

Les arbres, les arbrisseaux, les plantes, sont la parure et le vêtement de la terre. Rien n'est si triste que l'aspect d'une campagne nue et pelée, qui n'étaie aux yeux que des pierres, du limon et des sables; mais vivifiée par la nature, et revêtue de sa robe de noces, au milieu du cours des eaux et du chant des oiseaux, la terre offre à l'homme, dans l'harmonie des trois règnes, un spectacle plein de vie, d'intérêt et de charmes, le seul spectacle au monde dont ses yeux et son cœur ne se lassent jamais.<sup>27</sup>

It occurs to Rousseau that, as far as his personal experience is concerned, he has never stopped to consider the individual attractions of the external world. Consequently, he now makes an effort to *détailler le spectacle de la nature*, which he had regarded hitherto only *en masse* and *dans son ensemble*. In other words, his impressions have always been more or less general; he has enjoyed the effect of the whole at the expense of detail.

When, however, he studies the situation, his conclusion is that to which he has so often come before. He attributes the beauty of nature directly to the *harmonie des trois règnes*; together they

<sup>26</sup> *Réveries*, v. IX, p. 389.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

create a *spectacle plein de vie, d'intérêt et de charmes*. Concord, unity and balance, upon which he bases all his aesthetic judgments, are exhibited nowhere as they are in this sphere; the result is a source of never-ending pleasure for the sympathetic beholder.

Concurrent with the harmony, *contrastes* and *mélanges* which Rousseau values so highly, there is another factor which has its bearing upon the situation: it is what Rousseau himself calls *les idées accessoires*. The trains of thought induced by what he observes are as important for him as the external world itself. We must not forget that his prime consideration is either himself, or mankind in general; from this he comes to consider the bonds which exist between it and its *milieu*. His reflections usually take the form of reverie.

. . . la chaîne des idées accessoires qui m'attachent à la botanique . . . rassemble et rappelle à mon imagination toutes les idées qui la flattent davantage; les prés, les eaux, les bois, la solitude, la paix surtout, et le repos qu'on trouve au milieu de tout cela, sont retracés par elle incessamment à ma mémoire. Elle me fait oublier les persécutions des hommes, leur haine, leurs mépris, leurs outrages, et tous les maux dont ils ont payé mon tendre et sincère attachement pour eux. Elle . . . me rend heureux bien souvent encore, au milieu du plus triste sort qu'ait subi jamais un mortel.<sup>28</sup>

Just as he draws spiritual stimulation from these contacts, so does he treasure concrete souvenirs from his solitary walks. As an older man, no longer able to go about with his former vigor, he contents himself with the herbarium which he has gathered with great care. The images which it conjures up in his mind compensate for any unhappiness which might otherwise cloud his life. As he passes his experiences in review, they create in him a sentiment of peace and repose. This exemplifies for us once again the essence of his feeling for nature. The associations of a given scene or landscape are as important for him as the sight itself. The fact that he speaks of it in such definite terms shows that his powers of analysis are capable of functioning even in situations dealing most directly with himself.

The first of these *idées accessoires* is that of convenience or accommodation for the individual as nature seems to provide it. I mention this first, because it is one of the most immediate

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 382.

echoes of those of Rousseau's predecessors who also count it of great importance. I refer, of course, to the Shaftesbury school of thought which declares the useful to be as significant as what is harmonious and orderly in their concept of Beauty. Each item must serve a definite purpose, and its validity is to be determined through its potential service to mankind.

One finds excellent examples of this in the transitional figure of l'abbé Prévost. See above, chapter I, pp. 24-25, for his notations of neatness and suitable arrangement: *rues percées avec méthode; elle ne manquait ni de propreté, ni d'agrément; les cours sont . . . fort nettes et fort unies*, etc. The notion of suitability also appears in his novels.<sup>29</sup> Rousseau seems to make a slightly different application of it in his description of the *lac de Biemme*, however, for here he notices a distinct lack of any concern for the ordinary traveler.<sup>30</sup> *Il n'y a pas . . . de grandes routes commodes pour les voitures*, a situation which has, indeed, its compensations. This means that *le pays est peu fréquenté par les voyageurs*, and that, in consequence, it is all the more delightful for the stray wanderer. His comment upon this factor shows that it figures in his appreciation of a scene or locality.

He alludes to it again in a more personal connection when he relates some of his own experiences. Here nature seems to have made no provision for the safety and security of man, for in one case, only the presence of a carefully constructed parapet relieves Rousseau of genuine fright, while in another, the unsuspecting passer-by is drenched by a beautiful, but deceptive, waterfall. Human labor has made the first point accessible, while the lack of it, or of any signs of warning whatever, diverts one's attention from the second when he becomes aware of his sad condition.

Non loin d'une montagne coupée qu'on appelle le Pas de l'Échelle, au-dessous du grand chemin taillé dans le roc, à l'endroit appelé Chailles, court et bouillonne dans des gouffres affreux une petite rivière qui paroît avoir mis à les creuser des milliers de siècles. On a bordé le chemin d'un parapet pour prévenir les malheurs: cela faisoit que je pouvois contempler au fond et gagner des vertiges tout à mon aise, car ce qu'il y a de plaisant dans mon goût pour les lieux escarpés, est qu'ils me font tourner la tête; et j'aime beaucoup ce tournoient, pourvu que je sois en sûreté. Bien appuyé sur le parapet, j'avançois le nez, et je restois là des heures entières, entrevoyant de temps en

<sup>29</sup> See above, *Histoire de M. Cleveland*, p. 26.

<sup>30</sup> See above, p. 73.

temps cette écume et cette eau bleue dont j'entendois le mugissement à travers les cris des corbeaux et des oiseaux de proie qui voloient de roche en roche et de broussaille en broussaille, à cent toises au-dessous de moi. Dans les endroits où la pente étoit assez unie et la broussaille assez claire pour laisser passer des cailloux, j'en allois chercher au loin d'aussi gros que je les pouvois porter, je les rassemblois sur le parapet en pile; puis, les lançant l'un après l'autre, je me délectois à les voir rouler, bondir et voler en mille éclats avant que d'atteindre le fond du précipice.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to a real appreciation of the wild beauty of this mountain torrent, with foam, its roaring in the deep gorge, the birds, the rocky cliffs and scrub-growth, we see an equally lively concern for his own personal security. He even courts disaster, to a certain extent, but only because he knows the parapet is there; this gives him the opportunity of deliberately creating the sensation which would be his ruin, were it not for this barrier. *Gagner des vertiges tout à mon aise; j'aime . . . ce tournoisement, pourvu que je sois en sûreté; bien appuyé sur le parapet*, show that his attention is, after all, divided. Saving his skin is more important than even the most grandiose of landscapes.

The sequel to this passage contains the second of the possible pitfalls awaiting the unwary observer. Since there is no kind of a warning here, one is apt to suffer a most uncomfortable and thorough drenching which quite destroys one's admiration for the cascade.

Plus près de Chambéry j'eus un spectacle semblable en sens contraire. Le chemin passe au pied de la plus belle cascade que je vis de mes jours. La montagne est tellement escarpée, que l'eau se détache net et tombe en arcade assez loin pour qu'on puisse passer entre la cascade et la roche, quelquefois sans être mouillé: mais si l'on ne prend bien ses mesures, on y est aisément trompé, comme je le fus; car, à cause de l'extrême hauteur, l'eau se divise et tombe en poussière, et, lorsqu'on approche un peu trop de ce nuage, sans apercevoir d'abord qu'on se mouille, à l'instant on est tout trempé.<sup>82</sup>

Rousseau notices the contrast between this spot and the preceding one. Both comparison and differentiation figure in the first sentence. The waterfall is beautiful, but treacherous, for, if *l'on ne prend bien ses mesures*, the damage is done before one notices it. The result is that one turns from the scenery to his

<sup>81</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, pp. 122-123.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

own condition, and the human element takes precedence over the natural.

Another consideration which is important for Rousseau relates to time, usually in a comparative sense. That is to say, he is moved, upon occasion, to reflect upon the changes in him which the years have brought, or, upon a more elaborate scale, to meditate upon the successive ages of the universe. While the first of these tends somewhat toward sentimentalism, the second shows a practical interest in geological and geographical data. Each, moreover, has its bearing upon his reaction to what is before him.

When Saint-Preux takes Julie, now Madame de Wolmar, on an excursion on Lake Geneva, he suffers an experience, the intensity of which is enhanced by the effect of their surroundings. Together they have visited the places where he formerly took refuge from the inclement weather, and which offered a vantage-point for gazing down upon the home of his love. In spite of themselves, the two choke with pent-up emotion; the familiar sights and sounds of the everyday sport of boating increase the agitation to which they eventually give way.

Après le souper, nous fîmes nous asseoir sur la grève. . . . Insensiblement la lune se leva. l'eau devint plus calme, et Julie me proposa de partir . . . Nous gardions un profond silence. Le bruit égal et mesuré des rames m'excitoit à rêver. Le chant assés gai des bécassines, me retraçant les plaisirs d'un autre âge, au lieu de m'égayer m'attristoit. Peu à peu je sentis augmenter la mélancolie dont j'étois accablé. Un ciel serain, les doux rayons de la lune, le frémissement argenté dont l'eau brilloit autour de nous, le concours des plus agréables sensations, la présence même de cet objet chéri, rien ne put détourner de mon coeur mille réflexions douloureuses.<sup>29</sup>

This is Rousseau's usual method of procedure: starting from a few detailed observations, the sound of the oars and the song of the birds, he comes to think of other things, particularly himself. Unhappy at present, he relives in his imagination *les plaisirs d'un autre âge*; he recalls them with longing and regret. Their memory is so touching that they deepen his sadness, until he is overcome by the *concours des plus agréables sensations*. Working in unison upon him, their attraction is so compelling that nothing can distract him from it.

<sup>29</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. III, pp. 287-288.

In this passage, however, we find specific sensory notations, such as have not yet appeared to any great extent in the selections which we have studied. We have seen how in Rousseau's approach to nature, his interest in the rôle of man and his endless search for reverie very often preclude any extensive observation of such details in themselves. Occasionally, on the other hand, he gives several, as in this instance: *le bruit mesuré des rames, le chant assés gai des bécassines, les doux rayons de la lune, le concours des plus agréables sensations* show his perception and subsequent synthesis of several items. *Le frémissement argenté dont l'eau brilloit autour de nous*, the most vivid of them all, is singled out for special comment by M. Lanson in his *Art de la Prose*. Here Rousseau has combined impulses which, theoretically, are unrelated; the movement of the water is characterized by a color, the whole effect is expressed in terms of light. Thus he achieves an "impression instantanée,"<sup>34</sup> which is both complete in itself and striking.

Returning to the question of time, we find Rousseau reflecting upon it once again, this time in terms of his advancing age in the season of the year which is most conducive to such retrospection, namely, the autumn.

. . . je quittai . . . ces menues observations pour me livrer à l'impression non moins agréable, mais plus touchante, que faisoit sur moi l'ensemble de tout cela. Depuis quelques jours on avoit achevé la vendange; les promeneurs de la ville s'étoient déjà retirés, les paysans aussi quittoient les champs jusqu'aux travaux d'hiver. La campagne, encore verte et riante, mais défeuillée en partie, et déjà presque déserte, offroit partout l'image de la solitude et des approches de l'hiver. Il résulta de son aspect un mélange d'impression douce et triste, trop analogue à mon âge et à mon sort pour que je ne m'en fisse pas l'application. Je me voyois au déclin d'une vie innocente et infortunée, l'âme encore pleine de sentimens vivaces, et l'esprit encore orné de quelques fleurs, mais déjà flétries par la tristesse, et desséchées par les ennuis. Seul et délaissé, je sentoient venir le froid des premières glaces, et mon imagination tarissante ne peuploit plus ma solitude d'êtres formés selon mon coeur.<sup>35</sup>

As is so often the case, he indicates for us the result of the combination of many factors: *l'impression . . . que faisoit . . . l'ensemble de tout cela*. It is further qualified by his remark that it is *plus touchante* at the same time that it is *non moins agréable*,

<sup>34</sup> Lanson, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

<sup>35</sup> *Rêveries*, v. IX, pp. 332-333.



again a relative point of view. Furthermore, the countryside as a whole offers a *mélange d'impression* to which Rousseau's response is too keen to be disregarded. There follows the comparison between his state of decline and that of the fall, of withered blossoms, both literal and figurative, covering a spark of life still glowing beneath them.

The idea of time also appears in his observations of a geological import. As he looks at the mountains, the thought of the ages which have passed in their formation crosses his mind, diverting the course of his meditation. In the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Saint-Preux brings Julie to his former retreat across from her home. It is the first time he has visited it since his return from his trip around the world; it is the only time he has ever brought Julie here. His cognizance of all this taxes his self-control to the utmost. In a long letter to Milord Edouard, he gives a picture of this wild and rugged spot.

Nous y parvînmes [à ce 'lieu si chéri'] après une heure de marche par des sentiers tortueux et frais, qui, montant insensiblement entre les arbres et les rochers, n'avoient rien de plus incommode que la longueur du chemin. . . . Ce lieu solitaire formoit un réduit sauvage et désert; mais plein de ces sortes de beautés qui ne plaisent qu'aux âmes sensibles et paroissent horribles aux autres. Un torrent formé pas la fonte des neiges rouloit à vingt pas de nous une eau bourbeuse, et charrioit avec bruit du limon, du sable et des pierres. Derrière nous une chaîne de roches inaccessibles séparoit l'esplanade où nous étions de cette partie des Alpes qu'on nomme les glaciers, parce que d'énormes sommets de glaces qui s'accroissent incessamment les couvrent depuis le commencement du monde. Des forêts de noirs sapins nous ombrageoient tristement à droite. Un grand bois de chêne étoit à gauche au delà du torrent, et au dessous de nous cette immense plaine d'eau que le lac forme au sein des Alpes nous séparoit des riches côtes du pays de Vaud, dont la Cime du majestueux Jura couronnoit le tableau."<sup>2</sup>

Into a scene where the temporal once figured so prominently, Saint-Preux introduces a sentiment of eternity with his observations on the glaciers . . . qui . . . couvrent [les Alpes] depuis le commencement du monde. This seems to be a stabilizing influence which balances both the emotional element and the notion of movement and noise in the *eau bourbeuse*, [qui] charrioit avec bruit du limon, . . . .

The familiar technique of comparison and contrast also re-

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, v. III, pp. 284-285.

appears, for the place is one of rugged beauty, of a type to appeal to some and not to others. One's reaction to it depends largely upon his *état d'âme*, while the rest of the passage, which I shall give next, is thrown into greater relief through its juxtaposition with what has gone before. Granted the wildness of the locality, however, nature shows itself accommodating for man, for the path is not difficult, only long. Rousseau even uses the term *incomode*, but in a manner which minimizes its negative connotation.

There are, in addition, a few sensory details which contribute to the air of reality of the whole: the noisy torrent with its muddy waters and the dark pines casting shadows. The latter elicit special comment from M. Lanson. While Rousseau's language offers nothing new in the way of vocabulary proper,<sup>37</sup> nevertheless he achieves extremely effective imagery through his metaphors, "... qui mêlent intimement les deux mondes moral et physique, qui les fait comme pénétrer l'un dans l'autre."<sup>38</sup> Rousseau seeks to express "... des affinités de sensations"<sup>39</sup> by disregarding the usual distinctions made between them.<sup>40</sup> He finds the *ombrages de noirs sapins* to be *tristes*, a sentiment which is the more impressive because it is the combination of several.

The second part of this passage presents a marked contrast with the first.

Au milieu de ces grands et superbes objets, le petit terrain où nous étions étaloit les charmes d'un séjour riant et champêtre; quelques ruisseaux filtoient à travers les rochers, et rouloient sur la verdure en filets de cristal. Quelques arbres fruitiers sauvages panchoient leurs têtes sur les nôtres; la terre humide et fraîche étoit couverte d'herbe et de fleurs. En comparant un si doux séjour aux objets qui l'environnoient, il sembloit que ce lieu désert dût être l'azile de deux amans échappés seuls au bouleversement de la nature.<sup>41</sup>

Its atmosphere of peace and quiet is enhanced by its very isolation. While he does not give a detailed picture of the spot, Saint-Preux makes it appear as a haven of refuge in the general turmoil and chaos from which nature itself has not been spared. The conflicting forces which are at work within the individual find an echo in the universe; this little corner alone seems to have escaped them.

<sup>37</sup> Lanson, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>41</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. III, pp. 285-286.

A similar sentiment appears in selections which we have already considered. For example, the notion of time figures in Rousseau's reaction to the tumbling stream in its gorge, *qui paroît avoir mis à [le] creuser des milliers de siècles*.<sup>42</sup> This is important, for while, at first glance, it may seem extraneous, it indicates his interest in the practical aspect of a situation.

There are times when Rousseau is brought to reflect upon the stability, or lack of it, in the natural order of things. It drifts into his reverie in such a mild fashion, however, as not to disturb his serenity or peace of mind. He speaks of this in his description of the island of Saint-Pierre. Not content with a day of idleness on the lake, he frequently comes down to the shore again at dusk. At this time, his meditations become even sweeter, if it is possible, than at any other hour of the day. All his senses are fascinated by the gentle sights and sounds of the evening. He sits, almost as if hypnotized, dreaming by the water's edge.

Quand le soir approchoit, je descendois des cimes de l'île, et j'allois volontiers m'asseoir au bord du lac, sur la grève, dans quelque asile caché; là, le bruit des vagues et l'agitation de l'eau, fixant mes sens et chassant de mon âme toute autre agitation, la plongeant dans une rêverie délicieuse, où la nuit me surprenoit souvent sans que je m'en fusse aperçu. Le flux et le reflux de cette eau, son bruit continu, mais renflé par intervalles, frappant sans relâche mon oreille et mes yeux, supplétoient aux mouvemens internes que la rêverie éteignoit en moi, et suffisoient pour me faire sentir avec plaisir mon existence, sans prendre la peine de penser. De temps à autre naissoit quelque foible et courte réflexion sur l'instabilité des choses de ce monde, dont la surface des eaux m'offroit l'image; mais bientôt ces impressions légères s'effaçoient dans l'uniformité du mouvement continu qui me berçoit, et qui, sans aucun concours actif de mon âme, ne laissoit pas de m'attacher au point qu'appelé par l'heure et par le signal convenu je ne pouvois m'arracher de là sans effort.<sup>43</sup>

The motion and lapping of the wavelets lull him to a half-sleeping, half-waking state. He is conscious of scarcely more than the fact of his presence there. Languid, almost drowsy, he reflects upon the imponderables of the universe, regarding them with an air of detachment which he succeeds in communicating to us as we read of his experience.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> See above, p. 82.

<sup>43</sup> *Réveries*, v. IX, p. 362.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. A. Monglond, *op. cit.*

We have here, I think, the summation of Rousseau's sentiment toward nature. Although he seeks the pleasures of vague and indeterminate reverie, there flash through it momentary considerations of things the farthest removed from his personal control, *l'instabilité des choses de ce monde*. In reality, however, this is of secondary importance, for he is as though transfixed by the sensations which crowd in upon him: *le bruit des vagues, l'agitation de l'eau, frappant sans relâche mon oreille et mes yeux*. Visual and auditory impulses weave their charm about him, melting into *l'uniformité du mouvement continu*, which releases the innermost depths of his being from all activity, save the enjoyment of his delightful situation.

The whole passage breathes an air of soothing *bercement*, as much through the rhythmical swing of its phrases as by its series of images: *bruit continu, frappant sans relâche, mouvement continu*, all indicate an undercurrent of stimulation, which, although it is uninterrupted, is so gentle as to insinuate itself into one's spirit, with an irresistible, soporific effect.

Sometimes Rousseau does not lose his sense of identity quite so completely, however, but finds in congenial surroundings another kind of experience which is equally satisfying, that is, a spanning of time and space in such a manner as to carry him in imagination "to the ends of the earth." His first reconnoitering of a new home is that of the environs rather than of the house itself. He tells how insistent this urge is, particularly when he finally takes up residence in the Ermitage of Madame d'Épinay.

Mon premier soin fut de me livrer à l'impression des objets champêtres dont j'étois entouré. Au lieu de commencer à m'arranger dans mon logement, je commençai par m'arranger pour mes promenades, et il n'y eut pas un sentier, pas un taillis, pas un bosquet, pas un réduit autour de ma demeure que je n'eusse parcouru dès le lendemain. Plus j'examinais cette charmante retraite, plus je la sentois faite pour moi. Ce lieu solitaire plutôt que sauvage me transportoit en idée au bout du monde.<sup>45</sup>

His customary reaction appears once again: appreciation of *l'impression des objets champêtres*; evaluation of their relative wildness, *lieu solitaire plutôt que sauvage*; sensation of being transported, at least in fancy, to another realm.

By way of summary, I think the basic factors in Rousseau's

<sup>45</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 288.

observation of nature may be indicated in the following manner: closely attentive upon occasion, he is capable, within limits, of regarding a given scene or situation objectively. His ultimate concern, however, is himself, and his position relative to these elements. This transition of thought is accompanied by a shift of attention from the individual features of the external world to the general effect which they create. His account of their blending gains in impressiveness as details are absorbed or obliterated.

Before we turn to a closer study of Rousseau's interpretation of the rôle of man in this scheme of things, it is, perhaps, of interest to indicate his judgment concerning what is obviously artificial. For example, he is quick to sense the false note in a landscape which has been carefully plotted and drawn to scale. He does not derive the same satisfaction from contemplating the studied symmetry of an English garden or the planned confusion of a Chinese one that he does in hunting herbs which grow wild in the country. He gives evidence of this more than once in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* where the bower and bird-sanctuary of Julie, in particular, offer a "close-up" of manufactured scenery. He can but admire the ingenuity and industry which are exemplified in such a project, but he does not find in it the deeper enjoyment of free, unhampered nature. Saint-Preux takes great delight in enumerating the trees, flowers and vines that grow so luxuriantly here, but his enthusiastic analysis reflects in itself the unwieldy mass of vegetation which has been crowded into a space which is too small to accommodate it. True, one finds here cool and fragrant shelter from the heat of the sun, but it is essentially the mechanics of this little spot which attract his attention. He notes the clever plan of training the long branches of some of the trees to take root and thus form arcades, the careful carelessness with which vines have been draped from tree to tree, the engineering which makes possible little fountains and rapids and trickling rills all from one main stream of water which is not over-plentiful at its source, the perspective of height achieved by planting smaller trees at the top of a slope and larger ones at the bottom, the effect of length and depth produced by clever serpentine paths which, less direct than a straight walk, give the leisurely stroller the impression of going far in a short distance. He readily recognizes the lavish beauty of such con-

centrated gardening, but never forgets that this is, after all, a "prétendu verger."<sup>46</sup> He takes delight in returning later, but somehow succeeds in giving the impression that after all the most satisfactory way of enjoying such super-abundant growth is in the short and carefully supervised visits which alone Julie allows her household to make.<sup>47</sup>

This bower with its lavish display gives rise to a discussion of the types of gardening which are to be found in various parts of the world. Saint-Preux, the interlocutor, is reminded of the elaborate horticulture in far-off China, where he was obliged to admire the skill and ingenuity of the designer, but where, indeed, so many unrelated details assembled in a limited area gave an impression of decided artificiality.

. . . j'ai vu à la Chine des jardins . . . faits avec tant d'art que l'art n'y paroissoit point, mais d'une manière si dispendieuse et entretenus à si grands fraix que cette idée m'ôtoit tout le plaisir que j'aurois pu goûter à les voir. C'étoient des roches, des grottes, des cascades artistielles dans des lieux plains et sablonneux où l'on n'a que de l'eau de puits; c'étoient des fleurs et des plantes rares de tous les climats de la chine et de la tartarie rassemblées et cultivées en un même sol. On n'y voyoit à la vérité ni belles allées ni compartiments réguliers; mais on y voyoit entassées avec profusion des merveilles qu'on ne trouve qu'éparses et séparées. La nature s'y présentait sous mille aspects divers, et le tout ensemble n'étoit point naturel.<sup>48</sup>

He makes the same criticism of the English garden, which lacks that beauty and simplicity of a spot which may be tended and cared for, but which is not plotted and pruned by geometricians.

Tel est par exemple le parc célèbre de Milord Cobham à Staw. C'est un composé de lieux très beaux et très pittoresques dont les aspects ont été choisis en différens pays, et dont tout paroît naturel excepté l'assemblage, comme dans les jardins de la Chine dont je viens de vous parler. Le maître et le créateur de cette superbe solitude y a même fait construire des ruines, des temples, d'anciens édifices, et les tems ainsi que les lieux y sont rassemblés avec une magnificence plus qu'humaine. Voilà précisément de quoi je me plains. Je voudrais que les amusemens des hommes eussent toujours un air facile qui ne fût point songer à leur foiblesse, et qu'en admirant ces merveilles, on n'eût point l'imagination fatiguée des sommes et des travaux qu'elles ont coûtés.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. III, p. 224.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 224-230.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 241-242.

## CHAPTER IV

### MAN'S PLACE IN NATURE AS ROUSSEAU OBSERVES IT

As long as Rousseau remains attentive to his surroundings, he reveals a clarity and precision of observation, an eye for detail and a sense of balance and proportion that runs rather consistently through his descriptive passages. A landscape, a particular mountain view may appeal to him as much through its scenic merits as through any personal reaction he may feel toward it. If such is the case, he shows a genuine appreciation of the fitness of things, of harmony, order and unity as he finds them illustrated. In these standards of judgment, he follows the Shaftesbury principles and technique.

The language in which he draws his sketches also echoes this sentiment, for phrases offset phrases, an enumeration of specific details leads, in a gradual crescendo, to the climax, *l'effet général de tout cela*. Thus both his method and his medium of expression concur in a graphic portrayal of the world of nature as it appears to him.

There is still another element which enters into Rousseau's considerations. He is neither a scientist nor a specialist who studies this field for its own sake alone. He is equally interested in the human side of the equation; this figures to a marked degree in his interpretation of what he sees about him. That is to say, that just as there is a realm external to himself which he finds to be very attractive, so is there something within him which responds in a definite way to it. In the last analysis, it is the latter of these two features which claims Rousseau's greater attention.

In the case of Rousseau personally, the types of scenery and landscape which appeal to him the most strongly are those which contribute to a condition which he finds particularly delightful, namely, reverie. He indicates quite clearly that as agreeable as the individual considerations may be, they invariably blend and mingle, slipping beyond the limits of his conscious perception. A state of day-dreaming supersedes the enjoyment of what is actually before him; the consequence of this is, of course, his complete unawareness of his surroundings. As he himself puts

it, ". . . on oublie tout, on s'oublie soi-même, on ne sait plus où l'on est."<sup>1</sup> It is with this subjective note which figures so largely in Rousseau's contacts with the world of nature that the following remarks are concerned.

A brief review of his method of observation may first be indicated, as we shall make it our point of departure. The whole story of Rousseau's *sentiment de la nature*, which is, after all, one of the predominating factors in his life, is based upon his response to external impulses. They reach him through particularly sensitive organs.

Dominé par mes sens, quoi que je puisse faire, je n'ai jamais su résister à leurs impressions, et, tant que l'objet agit sur eux, mon coeur ne cesse d'en être affecté; mais ces affections passagères ne durent qu'autant que la sensation qui les cause.<sup>2</sup>

This habit of regarding closely, but with no intention or even desire of remembering has already appeared as typical of Rousseau.<sup>3</sup> Each item in succession is momentarily interesting, but there is no occasion to regard one more seriously than another, for they will all be there when he comes to look for them again.

This keenness of physical perception is accompanied by a corresponding mental predisposition toward the appreciation of their inherent beauty. Rousseau recognizes that while this faculty assures the individual much pleasure, it also exposes him to possible suffering. Someone who is easily influenced by the general atmosphere of his surroundings is capable of passing from the heights of happiness to the depths of despair because of it.

Ces réflexions tristes, . . . me faisoient replier sur moi-même avec un regret qui n'étoit pas sans douceur. Il me sembloit que la destinée me devoit quelque chose qu'elle ne m'avoit pas donné. A quoi bon m'avoir fait naître avec des facultés exquises, pour les laisser jusqu'à la fin sans emploi? Le sentiment de mon prix interne, en me donnant celui de cette injustice, m'en dédommageoit en quelque sorte, et me faisoit verser des larmes que j'aimois à laisser couler.

Je faisois ces méditations dans la plus belle saison de l'année, au mois de juin, sous les bocages frais, au chant du rossignol, au gazouillement des ruisseaux. Tout concourut à me replonger dans cette mollesse trop

<sup>1</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. II, p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Réveries*, v. IX, p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 77.



séduisante, pour laquelle j'étois né, mais dont le ton dur et sévère où venoit de me monter une longue effervescence m'auroit dû délivrer pour toujours.<sup>4</sup>

This is written in the month of June, in the most brilliant and most colorful season of the year. But this very fact seems to sadden, and not to cheer, him. His *facultés exquis* can find no adequate medium of exercise or expression, in spite of the varied aspects of the countryside of which he is speaking. *Bocages frais, chant du rossignol, gazouillement des oiseaux* are items which bring in their train depressing, rather than uplifting reflections. The ultimate result is similar to that of many other of his experiences, for once again he gives himself up to the *mollesse trop séduisante* which the combination of these elements inspires within him.

It is to be expected that such definite physical perceptions should influence one's emotional reactions. Rousseau puts this part of his story into the mouth of Saint-Preux.

O Julie, que c'est un fatal présent du ciel qu'une âme sensible! Celui qui l'a reçu doit s'attendre à n'avoir que peine et douleur sur la terre. Vil jouet de l'air et des saisons, le soleil ou les brouillards, l'air couvert ou serein régleront sa destinée, et il sera content ou triste au gré des vents. Victime des préjugés, il trouvera dans d'absurdes maximes un obstacle invincible aux justes vœux de son cœur.<sup>5</sup>

He draws a comparison between the ice and snow and wintry blasts that torment him, and the discouragement and despair that fill his heart.

Depuis que je suis rapproché de vous, je ne roule dans mon esprit que des pensées funestes. Peut-être le séjour où je suis contribue-t-il à cette mélancolie; il est triste et horrible; il en est plus conforme à l'état de mon âme, et je n'en habiterois pas si patiemment un plus agréable. Une file de rochers stériles borde la côte, et environne mon habitation que l'hiver rend encore plus affreuse. Ah! je le sens, ma Julie, s'il falloit renoncer à vous, il n'y auroit plus pour moi d'autre séjour ni d'autre saison.

Dans les violens transports qui m'agitent je ne saurois demeurer en place; je cours, je monte avec ardeur, je m'élance sur les rochers; je parcours à grands pas tous les environs, et trouve par tout dans les objets la même horreur qui règne au dedans de moi. On n'apperçoit plus de verdure, l'herbe est jaune et flétrie, les arbres sont dépouillés,

<sup>4</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 305.    <sup>5</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. II, pp. 95-96.

le séchard et la froide bise entassent la neige et les glaces, et toute la nature est morte à mes yeux, comme l'espérance au fond de mon coeur.<sup>6</sup>

He sees his very sentiments reflected in nature: *rochers stériles, plus de verdure, l'herbe est jaune et flétrie, les arbres dépouillés, le séchard et la froide bise* all seem to reproduce *cette mélancolie* which weighs so heavily upon him. The atmosphere of the place breathes *la même horreur qui règne au dedans de moi*. The total effect of this forbidding and lifeless scene is one of absolute nothingness: *toute la nature est morte à mes yeux*. This bleakness finds an echo in Saint-Preux's own feeling of frustration: *comme l'espérance au fond de mon coeur*.

As Rousseau derives greater pleasure from his contacts with nature than with men, he is never at a loss to amuse himself when he is alone. He finds a never-ending source of interest in the plants and flowers which he discovers on his walks. They offer him a welcome relief from the stress and strain of city life which he often finds very unattractive.

Je gravis les rochers, les montagnes, je m'enfonce dans les vallons, dans les bois, pour me dérober, . . . au souvenir des hommes et aux atteintes des méchants. Il me semble que sous les ombrages d'une forêt je suis oublié, libre, et paisible, comme si je n'avois plus d'ennemis, . . . Plus la solitude où je vis alors est profonde, plus il faut que quelque objet en remplisse le vide, et ceux que mon imagination me refuse ou que ma mémoire repousse sont suppléés par les productions spontanées que la terre non forcée par les hommes offre à mes yeux de toutes parts. Le plaisir d'aller dans un désert chercher de nouvelles plantes couvre celui d'échapper à mes persécuteurs; et, parvenu dans des lieux où je ne vois nulles traces d'hommes, je respire plus à mon aise, comme dans un asile où leur haine ne me poursuit plus.<sup>7</sup>

The *productions spontanées* of the earth are inexhaustible, and they bring in their train an experience which he finds most comforting, namely, a period of distraction and escape from the concerns of one's daily routine.

In the next quotation, we note that he gives still greater attention to the details of what he observes, finally becoming completely absorbed in it. While in this instance this applies directly to his activities as a botanist, it also demonstrates his general method and the conclusions to which it brings him.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>7</sup> *Rêveries*, v. IX, p. 380.

Brillantes fleurs, émail des prés, ombrages frais, ruisseaux, bosquets, verdure, venez purifier mon imagination salie par tous ces hideux objets. Mon âme, morte à tous les grands mouvemens, ne peut plus s'affecter que par des objets sensibles; je n'ai plus que des sensations, et ce n'est plus que par elles que la peine ou le plaisir peuvent m'atteindre ici-bas. Attiré par les riens objets qui m'entourent, je les considère, je les contemple, je les compare, j'apprends enfin à les classer, et me voilà tout d'un coup aussi botaniste qu'a besoin de l'être celui qui ne veut étudier la nature que pour trouver sans cesse de nouvelles raisons de l'aimer.<sup>8</sup>

He enumerates for us those things which appeal most strongly to him. As he has but one channel of communication with them, he is affected only by *des objets sensibles*; his experiences are essentially *des sensations*, which have an influence upon his subsequent behavior. His observations on his own manner of study are also quite revealing: *considère, contemple, compare, apprendre à classer*, indicate an increasing concentration upon the subject at hand, until he becomes completely absorbed in it.

The sequel to this is, of course, his consideration of his own place in this order. Man and nature are so closely linked, in his mind, that he cannot reflect upon one without including the other. We have already seen the interweaving of the two in selections from the *Confessions*,<sup>9</sup> for Rousseau often speaks of the general impression of a given scene. This, usually, stimulates in him a pleasant state of reverie which carries him far away from both it and himself. He never tires of this, but rather seeks it out as frequently as possible. It becomes so important that it quite spoils him for city life, despite the unceasing hospitality of his friends.

Je me sentois fait pour la retraite et la campagne; il m'étoit impossible de vivre heureux ailleurs . . .<sup>10</sup>

He cannot properly attend to his social duties, for

. . . toujours mes bosquets, mes ruisseaux, mes promenades solitaires, venoient, par leur souvenir, me distraire, me contrister, m'arracher des soupirs et des desirs.<sup>11</sup>

He chafes under such conventions, for they are essentially artificial and based upon false standards. The 'naturalness'

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 378.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 78-79.

<sup>10</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 286.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

of the country comes far closer to his conception of the ideal existence. The following excerpt reveals the unsuspected depths of emotion which are stirred in him by a few simple observations in a rustic setting.

J'étois si ennuyé de salons, . . . j'étois si excédé de brochures, . . . que quand je lorgnois du coin de l'oeil un simple pauvre buisson d'épines, une haie, une grange, un pré; quand je humois, en traversant un hameau, la vapeur d'une bonne omelette au cerfeuil; quand j'entendois de loin le rustique refrain de la chanson des bisquiers, je donnois au diable et le rouge, et les falbalas, et l'ambre; et, regrettant le dîner de la ménagère et le vin du cru, j'aurais de bon coeur paumé la gueule à M. le chef et à M. le maître, qui me faisoient dîner à l'heure où je soupe, souper à l'heure où je dors. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Here Rousseau pauses to consider the very sensations themselves which awaken in him a nostalgia for country life. *Lorgnois*, *humois*, *entendois*, introduce, each in turn, a specific perception. Growing things, plain food, the carefree song of a person who is happy in the most humble surroundings, these all meet with his approval and satisfy his ambitions. They appeal to him because of their utter simplicity and unsophistication.

One of the main currents of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* is the attractiveness of the modest and unpretentious life. Julie and her husband enjoy complete domestic and, one is led to understand, also economic felicity through their adherence to a few fundamental principles. They are so self-evident as scarcely to need a novel of such proportions to prove their validity.<sup>13</sup>

Their standards call for temperance in food and drink, and one of the features of Julie's household which Saint-Preux specifically mentions is the wholesome fare upon which its members seem to thrive. Dairy products, wine and fish constitute its basis, and the obvious delight with which Saint-Preux speaks of these things is none other than Rousseau's own. The numerous indications of his preferences center chiefly around *les laitages*, *le bon vin*, and *les poissons* indigenous to Lake Geneva.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. R. A. Rice, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. III, where he characterizes country life; p. 199, *merveille*, *gru*, *céracée*, *écrelet*, *gauffres*; p. 201, where he gives the usual diet of Julie; p. 231, *pesette*; pp. 278-279, *besolet*, *gros-*

As one may readily see from the list of terms pertaining to comestibles, many are provincial or colloquial expressions. These are apt to be of Swiss origin; they lend an air of familiarity and spontaneity to the passages where they occur. This has been commented upon in studies which have been made of Rousseau's technique.<sup>16</sup> M. Lanson, for example, speaks of his sources: "Il prend le vocabulaire populaire, trivial, archaïque, étranger, genevois ou italien, peu lui importe."<sup>16</sup> In order to do this, "Il rejette . . . les préceptes de l'art classique . . .,"<sup>17</sup> while his occasional introduction of local terms adds to the wealth of his imagery. Simplicity of appetite, of standards and of language thus go hand-in-hand for Rousseau.

Such specific and detailed sensory notations, however, are relatively rare. Just as there is a reason for his emphasizing them in theory, so is there an explanation for his omission of them in his own observations. A member of the *Encyclopédiste* group, he recognizes the importance of its doctrine; but, as an individual, his reactions to the world about him are conditioned, not by external precept, but rather through personal motivation.

The most pleasing, and hence the most arresting attraction of nature for Rousseau is its gentle conduciveness to reverie. As it is through this medium that he achieves this delightful state of mind, one may readily calculate its influence upon him.

Furthermore, the pursuit of this pastime brings in its wake certain definite consequences. Since day-dreaming is a preoccupation with one's wandering thoughts, it obviously precludes the slightest interest in one's surroundings. They pass unobserved, serving only as a pleasing background when one finally rouses and resumes full control of all his faculties.

The net result of such an experience is that he enjoys the natural beauty of the place where he is until he drifts off, lost in meditation. He gives but scant attention to the details of the scene before him, for his impression is indistinct and undefined.

*sifflet*, *tiou-tiou*, *crenet*, *sifflasson*; p. 283, *truite du lac*, and v. IV, p. 34, allusions to *laitages*, *poissons du lac*; p. 44, *truites du lac*; p. 47, the various wines prepared from the vineyards of M. Wolmar; *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 43, *un goûter, du beurre frais, des fruits, du laitage*; p. 295, *omelette au cerfeuil, le dîner de la ménagère et le vin du cru*.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. A. François, F. Brunot, G. Lanson, *op. cit.*

<sup>17</sup> Lanson, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

That Rousseau notices and appreciates certain fundamental elements, however, is not to be denied. He is quick to see such factors as balance, order and contrast. As long as he concentrates upon these, his landscape descriptions remain largely objective and often didactic. With respect to himself, on the other hand, he is frank to admit that he is dominated by the effect of the scene as a whole. This is due in large measure to what he seeks to do, that is, forget himself in reverie. With this shift of attitude comes a change in his technique.

It is in the *Rêveries* that we may best study this characteristic. While Rousseau is living on the island of Saint-Pierre, he has excellent opportunities for indulging in all his favorite pursuits. Weather permitting, however, he invariably chooses drifting on the lake in a little boat at the will of the wind and the waves.

. . . j'allois me jeter seul dans un bateau que je conduisois au milieu du lac quand l'eau étoit calme; et là, m'étendant tout de mon long dans le bateau, les yeux tournés vers le ciel, je me laissois aller et dériver lentement au gré de l'eau, quelquefois pendant plusieurs heures, plongé dans mille rêveries confuses, mais délicieuses, et qui, sans avoir aucun objet bien déterminé ni constant, ne laissoient pas d'être à mon gré cent fois préférables à tout ce que j'avois trouvé de plus doux dans ce qu'on appelle les plaisirs de la vie. Souvent averti par le baisser du soleil de l'heure de la retraite, je me trouvois si loin de l'île, que j'étois forcé de travailler de toute ma force pour arriver avant la nuit close.<sup>18</sup>

The secret of the charm of day-dreaming remains one no longer. *Mille rêveries confuses, mais délicieuses, sans avoir aucun objet bien déterminé ni constant* take precedence over the most attractive of *ce qu'on appelle les plaisirs de la vie*. They fade away into insignificance in the face of such bliss.

Plus un contemplateur a l'âme sensible, plus il se livre aux extases qu'excite en lui cet accord. Une rêverie douce et profonde s'empare alors de ses sens, et il se perd avec une délicieuse ivresse dans l'immensité de ce beau système avec lequel il se sent indentifié. Alors tous les objets particuliers lui échappent; il ne voit et ne sent rien que dans le tout. Il faut que quelque circonstance particulière resserre ses idées et circoncrive son imagination, pour qu'il puisse observer par partie cet univers qu'il s'efforçoit d'embrasser.<sup>19</sup>

The interaction between the physical and mental becomes more and more apparent as he continues his analysis of this delectable

<sup>18</sup> *Rêveries*, v. IX, p. 361.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 374.

state. It bears the mark of both factors, for *une rêverie . . . s'empare . . . de ses sens; tous les objets particuliers lui échappent*; the climax comes when *il ne voit et ne sent rien que dans le tout*, for at this point *il se sent identifié* with all nature. His personality is fused, to a great degree, with the cosmos, and only a *circonstance particulière* can rouse him and bring him back to reality.

Je ne médite, je ne rêve jamais plus délicieusement que quand je m'oublie moi-même. Je sens des extases, des ravissements inexprimables, à me fondre, pour ainsi dire, dans le système des êtres, à m'identifier avec la nature entière. Tant que les hommes furent mes frères, je me faisais des projets de félicité terrestre; ces projets étant toujours relatifs au tout, je ne pouvois être heureux que de la félicité publique, et jamais l'idée d'un bonheur particulier n'a touché mon cœur que quand j'ai vu mes frères ne chercher le leur que dans ma misère. Alors, pour ne les pas haïr, il a bien fallu les fuir; alors, me réfugiant chez la mère commune, j'ai cherché dans ses bras à me soustraire aux atteintes de ses enfans; je suis devenu solitaire, ou, comme ils disent, insociable et misanthrope, parce que la plus sauvage solitude me paroit préférable à la société des méchans, qui ne se nourrit que de trahisons et de haine.<sup>20</sup>

Here we have Rousseau's story once more in his own words. His reverie is sweetest when he can forget even himself, losing his very identity through his desire to *me fondre . . . dans le système des êtres, à m'identifier avec la nature entière*. His statement is the more emphatic as it repeats some of the expressions which he used in the preceding excerpt; the importance of this activity in his life becomes more and more evident as he elaborates upon it. Such an experience holds for him *des ravissements inexprimables*, for through it he reaches the sublimation of all his aspirations.

His *Confessions* and *Rêveries* recount many incidents which reflect this side of his personality. He recalls one, for example, which takes him back to his days in Lyons. At that time, he was often obliged to spend the night in the open; alone and penniless, without steady employment, he had trouble to procure food, and sometimes lacked a roof over his head. He tells of one particularly lovely night which he has never forgotten.

Je me souviens . . . d'avoir passé une nuit délicieuse hors de la ville, . . . Il avoit fait très-chaud ce jour-là, la soirée étoit charmante;

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377.

la rosée humectoit l'herbe flétrie; point de vent, une nuit tranquille; l'air étoit frais sans être froid; le soleil, après son coucher, avoit laissé dans le ciel des vapeurs rouges dont la réflexion rendoit l'eau couleur de roses; les arbres des terrasses étoient chargés de rossignols qui se répondoient de l'un à l'autre. Je me promenois dans une sorte d'extase, livrant mes sens et mon cœur à la jouissance de tout cela, et soupirant seulement un peu de regret d'en jouir seul. Absorbé dans ma douce rêverie, je prolongeai fort avant dans la nuit ma promenade, sans m'apercevoir que j'étois las. Je m'en aperçus enfin. Je me couchai voluptueusement sur la tablette d'une espèce de niche ou de fausse porte enfoncée dans un mur de terrasse; le ciel de mon lit étoit formé par les têtes des arbres; un rossignol étoit précisément au-dessus de moi. Je m'endormis à son chant; mon sommeil fut doux, mon réveil le fut davantage. Il étoit grand jour: mes yeux, en s'ouvrant, virent l'eau, la verdure, un paysage admirable. Je me levai, me secouai. . . .<sup>21</sup>

Here we have more numerous sensory notations than is usual in Rousseau, for *l'air étoit frais sans être froid*; the sunset leaves in the heavens glowing colors which are reflected in the river; he is stirred by the song of the nightingales. He cannot resist the charm of this place where he is to remain until morning. He is in a state of excitement, he is carried away *dans une sorte d'extase*, when he suddenly realizes he is tired. Lying down where he happens to find himself, he sleeps until the dawn. The new day offers fresh delights with its *verdure*, its *paysage admirable*.

The main theme remains, however, the familiar one of *douce rêverie* which comes over him as he gives himself up to *la jouissance de tout cela*, an experience which is too exquisite not to be shared with another.

Thus does Rousseau analyze his reaction toward nature, why he loves it, which of its features are the most striking for him, what happens when he has reached a certain point in his reflections. It all comes down to the "indefinable something," whose very essence is elusive and evanescent, that binds him so closely to it.

What holds true for him also holds true for his hero, Saint-Preux. We find a similar situation in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, in his enthusiastic description of the Swiss Alps which is to be found in his feverish letter to Milord Edouard when he has returned from his tour of the world. In the meantime, Julie has

<sup>21</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, pp. 119-120.



assumed the duties of wife and mother, and it is with some trepidation that he comes back, despite the friendly advances of both Julie and her husband. The whole region is fraught with too many tender associations for him to come back to it without a quickened pulse and an impatient desire, yet inexplicable dread of his impending reunion with the dearest creature for him on all the earth. As he comes into familiar territory, his heart beats faster, and he gives himself up to pleasant reminiscences. He depicts the scene before him, and identifies himself with it, for he is stirred to such a degree as he has never been upon any previous occasion.

Plus j'approchois de la Suisse, plus je me sentois ému. L'instant où, des hauteurs du Jura je découvris le lac de Genève fut un instant d'extase et de ravissement. La vue de mon pays, de ce pays si cher où des torrens de plaisirs avoient inondé mon coeur; l'air des Alpes si salubre et si pur; le doux air de la patrie, plus suave que les parfums de l'orient; cette terre riche et fertile, ce paysage unique, le plus beau dont l'oeil humain fut jamais frappé; ce séjour charmant auquel je n'avois rien trouvé d'égal dans le tour du monde; l'aspect d'un peuple heureux et libre; la douceur de la saison, la sérénité du Climat; mille souvenirs délicieux qui réveilloient tous les sentimens que j'avois goûtés; tout cela me jettoit dans des transports que je ne puis décrire, et sembloit me rendre à la fois la jouissance de ma vie entière."<sup>22</sup>

Saint-Preux's method is Rousseau's. As he is alone, he does not have the opportunity of pointing out the various features of the landscape to a companion. That he is none the less aware of them, however, is readily to be seen from the enumeration which he gives of the effect of the sensations which he experiences as he at last sets eyes upon this cherished land. *La vue de mon pays, l'air des Alpes si salubre et si pur* are the things which strike him first. Then he attempts to explain the charm of *le doux air de la patrie*, for it is *plus suave que les parfums de l'orient*. Tactile and olfactory perceptions are mingled; farther on, he brings in considerations of an ethical or economic nature, in order to give some idea of the confusion of sentiment of which he is conscious. *Pays riche et fertile, peuple heureux et libre, mille souvenirs délicieux* springing up from *tous les sentimens que j'avois goûtés*, all contribute to the great emotion which

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, v. III, p. 156.

almost overpowers him. He suddenly realizes the futility of trying further to analyze the situation, for his are *des transports que je ne puis décrire*, and in that quality lies their strength.

Thus, while at first glance, Rousseau may give the impression of hasty or superficial observation, his *sentiment de la nature* goes very deep with him. There arises the question of his favorite type of scenery, which has been discussed particularly by M. Mornet in his study of the "Romantic" landscape in XVIIIth century French literature. It is in connection with the sketch of Saint-Preux's self-imposed retreat in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* that M. Mornet, as editor of the text, first comments upon the frequency of such passages in Rousseau.<sup>23</sup> He indicates that the sentiment expressed here corresponds to a similar one in the *Confessions*, but he calls the latter to our attention as being unique in all the works of Rousseau.

. . . on sait déjà ce que j'entends par un beau pays. Jamais pays de plaine, quelque beau qu'il fût, ne parut tel à mes yeux. Il me faut des torrens, des rochers, des sapins, des bois noirs, des montagnes, des chemins raboteux à monter et à descendre, des précipices à mes côtés qui me fassent bien peur.<sup>24</sup>

M. Mornet refers to this in his note in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, ". . . ce texte est unique dans l'oeuvre de Rousseau."<sup>25</sup>

He returns to the question elsewhere as well, giving it rather extensive treatment in the introductory volume of his edition of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, where he indicates that an interest in the out-of-doors is manifest throughout the whole of the XVIIIth century in French society. He also considers the attitude of many of Rousseau's associates with regard to it, both at the time of the composition of his novel and prior to it. He goes into still greater detail in his *Romantisme en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1912. In his characterization of the movement, he represents the romanticist of the XVIIIth century as aspiring ". . . à des frissons où les nerfs eussent aussi leur part."<sup>26</sup> This type of person made

<sup>23</sup> The sentence under special consideration appears in Part IV, letter XVII, v. III, p. 285: "Ce lieu solitaire formoit un réduit sauvage et désert; mais plein de ces sortes de beautés qui ne plaisent qu'aux âmes sensibles et paroissent horribles aux autres."

<sup>24</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 122.

<sup>25</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. III, p. 285, note 1.

<sup>26</sup> Mornet, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

... des efforts plus sincères pour s'éloigner de tout ce qui trahit la présence des hommes et la médiocrité des plaisirs sociaux. Le goût pour la haute montagne en fut la marque la plus forte."<sup>7</sup>

Does this description of the typical Romantic fit Rousseau? M. Mornet finds that it does not.

Rousseau lui-même n'en parla pas [de ce désir de l'évasion]. Il révéla l'allègement délicieux des horizons qui s'abaissent et de l'air plus vif des sommets: 'Ces méditations y prennent je ne sais quel caractère grand et sublime, proportionné aux objets qui nous frappent, je ne sais quelle volupté tranquille qui n'a rien d'âcre et de sensuel. . . . On y est grave sans mélancolie, paisible sans indolence, content d'être et de penser.'<sup>8</sup>

This is Rousseau's position *en raccourci*. He is inspired to meditations of *je ne sais quel caractère, proportionné aux objets*; he experiences *je ne sais quelle volupté tranquille*. Even in this situation he is aware of proportion and contrast: *on y est grave sans mélancolie, paisible sans indolence*. This happy combination of sentiments is conducive to the greatest peace of mind and contentment. This quotation is taken from the lengthy passage which I discussed in detail at the beginning of chapter III, p. 59 ff. I mention it again here in order to complete the cycle of Rousseau's interpretation of the world of nature.

M. Mornet continues with his study of the "Romantic" conception of it and the extent to which Rousseau differs from it.

Mais ni les glaciers, ni les neiges éternelles, ni les roches dressées dans les solitudes désolées n'ont trouvé place dans l'Helvétie qu'il [Rousseau] célèbre. Même aux heures où il oubliait ses prés fleuris pour nourrir des tristesses hostiles, il n'a jamais goûté la nature trop farouche. Neiges, glaces, torrent limoneux de Meillerie sans doute, mais il y faut le contraste d'un séjour riant et champêtre."<sup>9</sup>

What, then, is his preference? It is essentially the notion of moderation, the avoidance of extremes.

Aussi laissa-t-il à d'autres le soin d'aimer et de décrire les rochers tout nus des hautes Alpes. Le Valais que Saint-Preux traverse n'est que 'le mélange étonnant de la nature sauvage et de la nature cultivée.' Rousseau-Saint-Preux n'aima dans la nature que ce qui reste encore à la mesure de l'homme. Il y rêve invinciblement des asiles, non des déserts où les glaces n'accueillent que les vents et la lumière. On hésita d'ailleurs comme lui à affronter ces hautaines épouvantes."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

If Rousseau seems to enjoy a sort of shuddering horror before the awe-inspiring and at times treacherous beauty of Alpine scenery, he expresses equally often a love for the quiet and peaceful countryside which offers no such thrills. M. Mornet calls attention to this,<sup>31</sup> placing in juxtaposition two contrasting excerpts from Rousseau, one of which I have already mentioned.<sup>32</sup> The other, taken from his *Correspondance*, I give here.

Je ne connais aucun séjour triste et vilain avec de la verdure; mais s'il n'y a que des sables et des rochers tout nus, n'en parlons pas.<sup>33</sup>

This is from a letter written in 1762. M. Mornet, in commenting upon it, says that

Rousseau a aimé la nature riante et paisible. Ce n'est pas lui, mais Young, Ossian, les jardins anglais, etc., qui ont mis à la mode les 'horribles beautés.'<sup>34</sup>

Whatever contrasts may be present in the many-sided picture of Rousseau's love for nature, there is one factor which predominates over them all: it still exerts its appeal, calling him away from his daily occupations, even when he has lost his former physical endurance. This is made possible through his cherished herbarium, which he has gathered with care and which he studies with unceasing interest. No longer able to go about with "son carnet et sa loupe," he can, nevertheless, transport himself in fancy to his old haunts and favorite retreats.

Je ne reverrai plus ces beaux paysages, ces forêts, ces lacs, ces bosquets, ces rochers, ces montagnes, dont l'aspect a toujours touché mon coeur: mais maintenant que je ne peux plus courir ces heureuses contrées, je n'ai qu'à ouvrir mon herbier, et bientôt il m'y transporte. Les fragmens des plantes que j'y ai cueillies suffisent pour me rappeler tout ce magnifique spectacle. Cet herbier est pour moi un journal d'herborisations, qui me les fait recommencer avec un nouveau charme, et produit l'effet d'un optique qui les peindroit derechef à mes yeux.<sup>35</sup>

Although his specimens may be dried and faded, they never fail to work the charm of the out-of-doors and to carry him back to the locality where he culled them. These few samples serve the purpose admirably, and he is thus in a position to amuse and divert himself, despite his restricted freedom of movement.

<sup>31</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. III, p. 285, note 1.

<sup>32</sup> See above, p. 103.

<sup>34</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, loc. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Rousseau, *Oeuvres*, v. X, p. 363.

<sup>36</sup> *Réveries*, v. IX, p. 382.

In conclusion, Rousseau's reaction to the world of nature may be summarized in the following manner. His instinctive feeling for it finds expression in the way in which he writes of it. He is most deeply influenced by the general effect, the aggregate of the many features of a given scene. He does not dwell upon sensory notations, for his attention is centered upon other things. The colors he uses are largely from the conventional palette; sounds, odors and tactile perceptions are often scarcely more than indicated. He is led either to reverie or to thoughtful considerations provoked by what lies before him.<sup>86</sup> Thus his reflections assume at times a philosophical and even a religious cast. I shall discuss this more fully in my chapter, *The Elements of Rousseau's Sentiment de la Nature*.

This is perhaps the essence of his gift of painting. He has a lightness of touch and a delicacy of suggestion, which offer relatively little in the way of a careful description but which succeed most admirably in creating an "atmosphere." We feel as he feels; we dream as he dreams; imbued with his *sentiment de la nature*, we are as little concerned with its analysis as is he under the immediate conditions when he transports us to a realm of fanciful imagination.

<sup>86</sup> Cf., for example, the *Profession de foi* in the *Emile*, which I take up in chapter VI.

## CHAPTER V

### ROUSSEAU'S STYLE OF PORTRAITURE

While Rousseau's chief interest seems to lie in the world of nature and its most arresting features, there is another aspect of his descriptive technique which should be considered in a study of this kind. In the course of his checkered career, he comes in contact with many types of people, some of whom exert a beneficial influence upon him, others a less fortunate one, and still others who seem to have left no definite impression at all one way or the other. He also creates characters of his own, who, in turn, reflect some particular attitude or predisposition of Rousseau himself.

The extent to which he distinguishes among these personalities, real and fictional, is, however, somewhat restricted. That is to say, that although he seems to make more frequent use of colors in presenting them to us than in his landscapes, they remain, for the most part, thumb-nail sketches rather than full-length portraits. His indications of physical traits are usually brief, his notations of dress are incidental to the story. He occasionally comments upon the freshness of their complexion, observing whether they are faded and worn. For the most part, his remarks are succinct and condensed; even in their brevity, however, they point to certain general conclusions concerning this aspect of his writing.

As one of my chief considerations is Rousseau's use of color and other sensory notations, the following discussion will center mainly around this question. One must recognize, however, that he also reveals other stylistic traits which have their bearing upon the effectiveness of his portraits. These will be indicated as they appear in the course of our observations.

A list of all the colors which are to be found in the works of Rousseau with which this study is concerned will be given elsewhere; it will perhaps be sufficient at this point simply to illustrate with selected examples the most frequent uses he makes of his restricted palette. His range includes, for the most part, the basic tones of black, white, red and blue, with occasional combinations and shadings, as in brown, rose, ashen, blond. His technique particularly in describing persons, is merely to

note their most obvious points: the hair and eyes, or an article of clothing in addition to other personal features, such as stature, traits of character or a familiar gesture.

In his *Confessions* he tells us how he came to write the *Nouvelle Héloïse*; how the idea of contrast, if not antithesis between the protagonists was present in his mind from the beginning; how one personality was intended to complement another. Thus Julie and her cousin Claire were to be opposites in many respects, and all the more devoted because of their dissimilarity. He dismisses the question of their appearance briefly, even abruptly.

Je fis l'une brune et l'autre blonde, . . .<sup>1</sup>

Within the first few pages of the text, however, he returns to the subject of his heroine. Saint-Preux, who can no longer resist declaring his affection for his pupil, writes to her in secret; he has no sooner done it than he sees he has been mistaken in his presumption. She has changed visibly in the short time since his first note to her; he is alarmed and afraid for them both.

Vos yeux deviennent sombres, rêveurs, . . . vos vives couleurs se fanent; une pâleur étrangère couvre vos joues; la gaieté vous abandonne . . .<sup>2</sup>

This is the announcement of the beginning and not of the end of their romance, for now their love comes out in the open for the first time, at least between these two, if not for the rest of the household. It is not destined to have a peaceful and untroubled course, however, for Julie, who is the jealous guardian of her 'honor' at the same time that she is careful to reveal nothing of her attachment for Saint-Preux, is obliged to prescribe for both of them the conduct which will arouse the least suspicion.

At her insistence, Saint-Preux is obliged to leave his post more than once; upon one of these occasions Julie tries to temper his loneliness in a strange city by sending him a "talismán," a miniature of herself which she has contrived to procure and send surreptitiously to him. His first reaction is one of ecstatic delight; upon calmer reflection, however, he notices several details of the picture which do not correspond exactly to the

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. II, p. 13.

appealing beauty of his beloved. From his letter of criticism to her, we are able to gather a general idea of the appearance of the heroine herself, particularly with regard to her coloring. The artist,

. . . a placé la racine des cheveux trop loin des tempes, . . . Il a oublié les rameaux de pourpre que font en cet endroit deux ou trois petites veines sous la peau, à peu près comme dans ces fleurs d'iris que nous considérons un jour au jardin de Clarens. Le coloris des joues est trop près des yeux, et ne se fond pas délicieusement en couleur de rose vers le bas du visage comme sur le modèle. On diroit que c'est du rouge artificiel plaqué comme le carmin des femmes de ce pays. Ce défaut n'est pas peu de chose, car il te rend l'oeil moins doux et l'air plus hardi.<sup>3</sup>

Saint-Preux is not satisfied with the shading of her hair as it is represented on his tiny portrait; he even quotes from the Italian in order to indicate what he considers an accurate description.

Il t'a fait les cheveux et les sourcils de la même couleur, ce qui n'est pas: Les sourcils sont plus châains, et les cheveux plus cendrés.

*Bionda testa, oochi azurri, e bruno ciglio.*<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, he does not like her too-elaborate costume. She is evidently pictured with flowers in her hair. He would have her wear nothing of the sort.

. . . c'est l'or de tes cheveux qui doit parer ton visage, et non cette rose qui les cache et que ton teint flétrit.<sup>5</sup>

This passage reveals a close attention to details on the part of Saint-Preux, and, of course, Rousseau. Upon second consideration, however, one sees that this is a description of Julie as she is not, and not as she really is. Its approach is essentially negative, for it consists primarily of objections which are made against a portrait which seems, at first glance, to be accurate and life-like. *Trop loin, oublier, trop près, ne se fond pas, on diroit que, ce défaut n'est pas peu de chose, moins doux, plus hardi* are all expressions of adverse criticism indicating how far the artist has departed from actuality. The distinction made between

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402. M. Mornet identifies this line as a verse from the *Adone* of Marino, canto III, stanza 23 (p. 402, note 3).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



her hair and eyebrows is a neat one, showing the precision of his observation.

This is all inspired from one of Rousseau's fundamental precepts. Naturalness has a greater appeal for him than the most expert drawing, if the latter gives any hint of artificiality. The adaptation of one's appearance for the purposes of portraiture is as unsatisfactory for him as the pruning and training of plants in a garden. Art is inferior to nature when and if it modifies it to too great a degree. When defects are as noticeable as they are in this miniature of Julie, Saint-Preux has a distinct feeling of disappointment.

His long absences make inevitable certain changes in the appearance of both of the lovers. Julie, upon one occasion, has the small-pox, and, calling in a delirium for Saint-Preux, is the cause of his also falling ill of it. He learns of her desperate plight, and, coming to have a glimpse of her before leaving again, exposes himself to it and subsequently has it as well. Julie recovers with scarcely any scars; Saint-Preux is badly marked and Julie can never look upon him in later years without a pang of regret and an involuntary flush of pleasure that he dared run such a risk for her. When he comes home from his trip around the world, he finds her more beautiful than ever, blooming with regained health and with the dignity of her married state.

. . . je vis . . . qu'elle étoit réellement plus belle et plus brillante que jamais . . . elle a pris un peu plus d'embonpoint, qui ne fait qu'ajouter à son éblouissante blancheur.\*

In the course of this long romantic story, we learn practically nothing about the physical characteristics of Saint-Preux himself. Only through casual references to what he has become can we have any idea of how he looked before, but these details are in reality quite conventional and of no particular originality. The two most shocking changes in his face are the blemishes caused by the small-pox and the burned condition of his skin as the result of his months of travel. Julie writes to Claire,

*Son teint n'est plus reconnoissable; il est noir comme un more, et de plus fort marqué de la petite vérole.*<sup>†</sup>

\* *Ibid.*, v. III, p. 159.

† *Ibid.*, p. 167.

Claire answers the gentle insinuations of her cousin with regard to the return of one who once caused them so much uneasiness, yet to whom they have both been devoted.

Je te trouve . . . fort bonne de vouloir que . . . je coure baiser un visage noir et crotu, . . .<sup>a</sup>

This is all we ever learn concerning Saint-Preux; it is characteristic of all the other personalities portrayed in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, as well. Despite this lack of detailed physical description, however, the figures appear as distinct individuals and independent of one another. Each has his own point of view, each his method of self-expression. Rousseau succeeds in creating a character, in making him live and move before us, without giving us a picture of him as a person of flesh and blood.

The *Confessions* contain many more thumb-nail sketches. In this case, however, Rousseau is dealing with real people; he passes in review the friends and acquaintances with whom he has come in contact in the course of many years. His usual method is to mention something relating to their appearance: their coloring, the clothes they wore, a habitual gesture or attitude. These notations are brief, for he passes on to other considerations. This is often sufficient to give the reader a general impression, for Rousseau is clever at characterization in a few words. I shall leave this largely to one side, as I am particularly interested in the color element in his portraits. He employs the same terms with untiring repetition, apparently regarding them as satisfactory for his purpose. Occasionally, one thinks he is meeting for the second time a personage who has already appeared, so closely do his descriptions follow similar, unvaried lines.

Among the men and women who move through the pages of his autobiography, some of those who are most influential in Rousseau's life are presented in a very indefinite way, while others, whom he knew only for a short time, evoke a more elaborate treatment.

He records his first impression of Madame de Warens. Coming upon her unexpectedly, he is delighted and enamoured at the sight of her.

<sup>a</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172; *crotu* is identified by Rousseau as a "terme du pays"; M. Mornet adds that it is ". . . en effet un terme genevois et savoyard" (p. 172, note 1).

Je vois un visage pétri de grâces, de beaux yeux bleus pleins de douceur, un teint éblouissant, le contour d'une gorge enchantresse.<sup>9</sup>

Only incidentally does he later speak of her hair; another young woman whom he finds very attractive apparently has her coloring, and as he looks at her,

. . . ses cheveux d'un blond cendré et d'une beauté peu commune, me rappeloient ceux de ma pauvre maman dans son bel âge, . . .<sup>10</sup>

This was the young Madame de Chenonceaux of whom Rousseau always cherished a fond souvenir.

Although Madame d'Épinay receives considerable attention from Rousseau in his *Confessions*, he is, for the most part, content to talk about her rather than actually to describe her. He makes only the briefest mention of her.

Elle étoit fort maigre, fort blanche, . . .<sup>11</sup>

He writes of Madame d'Houdetot a little more at length, but, once again, he simply sketches her in black and white.

Madame d'Houdetot . . . n'étoit point belle; son visage étoit marqué de la petite vérole; son teint manquoit de finesse . . . elle avoit une forêt de grands cheveux noirs, naturellement bouclés, . . .<sup>12</sup>

He continues with a rather detailed analysis of her character, presenting her as gay, witty, refined and charming through her social graces and accomplishments rather than by virtue of sheer physical beauty.

Rousseau comes to know many women in the course of his career. Each one of them made some kind of an impression upon him, and in the *Confessions* he speaks of them as they come to mind, sorry to have lost sight of them, repentant of any wrong he may have done them, shuddering again at the thought of having barely escaped their clutches, or tenderly reminiscing on the very occasional great affections of his lifetime. These members of the "fair sex" pass before us as a varied throng, for it is particularly in sketching them that Rousseau uses colors. Each one has some distinguishing feature, even if it is merely the fact that she is either blond or brunette.

Once, when he is looking for employment, he is attracted by

<sup>9</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

a young woman in a shop. Asking her for work, he is given a sympathetic reception. As she is pretty, he promptly falls in love with her. She is Madame Basile, with whose husband Rousseau failed to reckon at the moment of his infatuation.

C'étoit une brune extrêmement piquante, mais dont le bon naturel peint sur son joli visage rendoit la vivacité touchante.<sup>13</sup>

Later he enters the service of a wealthy family, that of the marquis de Breil. He admires the daughter, but is careful not to betray a sentiment which would appear presumptuous in a lackey.

Mlle de Breil étoit une jeune personne à peu près de mon âge, bien faite, assez belle, très-blanche, avec des cheveux très-noirs, et, quoique brune, portant sur son visage cet air de douceur des blondes auquel mon coeur n'a jamais résisté.<sup>14</sup>

Later he tries his hand at giving music lessons at Chambéry. Two of his pupils come to mind as he lives these years again in his autobiography. One was Mlle de Mellarède,

. . . une brune très-vive, mais d'une vivacité caressante, . . .<sup>15</sup>

The other was Mlle de Menthon, of quite a different personality.

Ses cheveux étoient d'un blond cendré; elle étoit . . . très-timide et très-blanche, une voix nette, juste et flûtée, . . .<sup>16</sup>

The most vivid of these feminine characters, or at least the one of whom he gives the most detailed account is the dashing and brazen Zulietta, the courtesan, who initiates the guileless Rousseau into experiences of which he had never before dreamed and which he cannot look back upon without mingled emotions. She takes him by storm, sweeping him off his feet. He has a memory of flashes of color which recall their whirlwind affair. He is at Venice at the time, and Zulietta proves to be a vivacious little Italian. His first sight of her is at a dinner.

La gondole aborde et j'en vois sortir une jeune personne éblouissante . . . Elle étoit une brunette de vingt ans au plus . . . Ses grands yeux noirs à l'orientale lançoient dans mon coeur des traits de feu . . .<sup>17</sup>

During their short-lived *liaison*, Rousseau moves in a world of

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

excitement and animation such as he had never before suspected. Calling upon her, he finds her

. . . dans un déshabillé plus que galant . . . Je dirai seulement que ses manchettes et son tour de gorge étoient bordés d'un fil de soie garni de pompons couleur de rose . . .<sup>18</sup>

Tiring of such conduct, he suddenly wishes to withdraw; but as he is awkward and clumsy about it, his chief regret is that their rupture probably gave Zulietta a very poor impression of him. He is grieved at being unjustly despised, for he is still fascinated, in retrospect, by her beauty.

La fraîcheur de ses chairs, l'éclat de son coloris, la blancheur de ses dents, la douceur de son haleine, l'air de propreté répandu sur toute sa personne, . . .<sup>19</sup>

Turning to the men whom he mentions in his *Confessions*, we find that they receive similar treatment. Often they are even more briefly sketched, with the result that we do not retain a lasting impression of very many of them.

Madame de Warens tries to find a position for him. She speaks to a certain M. Gros, who is at the head of a seminary where she would like him to study. M. Gros is

. . . un bon petit homme, à moitié borgne, maigre, grison, . . .<sup>20</sup>

She succeeds in having him accepted, but he is not happy there. His Latin teacher is a creature who still inspires him with horror many years later. Rousseau's picture of him is clear and graphic.

Il avoit des cheveux plats, gras et noirs, un visage de pain d'épice, une voix de buffle, un regard de chat-huant, des crins de sanglier au lieu de barbe; son sourire étoit sardonique; ses membres jouoient comme les poulies d'un mannequin: j'ai oublié son odieux nom, mais sa figure effrayante et douceureuse m'est bien restée! et j'ai peine à me le rappeler sans frémir.<sup>21</sup>

Terrified and desperate under this man, he is subsequently put under the tutelage of another, a young abbé from Faucigny. He is M. Gâtier, who is endowed with all the gentleness, mildness and humility which were lacking in Rousseau's first teacher.

Je n'ai jamais vu de physionomie plus touchante que celle de M. Gâtier. Il étoit blond, et sa barbe tiroit sur le roux: il avoit le maintien ordi-

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

naire aux gens de sa province, qui, sous une figure épaisse, cachent tous beaucoup d'esprit; mais ce qui se marquoit vraiment en lui étoit une âme sensible, affectueuse, aimante. Il y avoit dans ses grands yeux bleus un mélange de douceur, de tendresse et de tristesse, qui faisoit qu'on ne pouvoit le voir sans s'intéresser à lui. Aux regards, au ton de ce pauvre jeune homme, on eût dit qu'il prévoyoit sa destinée, et qu'il se sentoit né pour être malheureux.<sup>22</sup>

These two portraits are among the most striking which he gives us. The most salient features of each are further accentuated by their contrast. Each of the two men is the embodiment of the characteristics which are lacking in the other. Their juxtaposition in his story, which is apparently an echo of his actual experience, serves to heighten the effect of two personalities so dynamic in themselves.

One of his most touching memories is that of Ignatic Emanuel de Altuna, a pleasure-loving but virtuous Spaniard. One feels that Rousseau's praise of him is sincere as it is simple and free from excessive adulation. Rousseau admires him as a man who controlled himself so well that he never came under the power of anyone else.

Il n'avoit pas plus le teint espagnol que le flegme. Il avoit la peau blanche, les joues colorées, les cheveux d'un châtain presque blond. Il étoit grand et bien fait. Son corps fut formé pour loger son âme.<sup>23</sup>

There is also a comic element present in at least one personality of the *Confessions*, which serves to relieve somewhat the increasingly pessimistic and fatalistic atmosphere of the work. It is the character of M. Simon, a judge, whom Rousseau presents in caricature, yet of whom he also speaks seriously and respectfully. He is a poor, undersized, misshapen creature, the object of scorn and ridicule, but endowed with a very capable and well-trained mind. He is tolerated rather than sought after in society, however, and is the butt of current jokes and witticisms. As he often holds court in bed in the morning, one of the tales told about him begins with a description of him as he appears ready for the cases which he is scheduled to hear.

Un matin . . . il attendoit dans ce lit, . . . les plaideurs, en belle coiffe de nuit bien fine et bien blanche, ornée de deux grosses bouffettes de ruban couleur de rose, un paysan arrive, . . .<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

The story goes on to say that he is mistaken for a woman, and that there is considerable explaining to be done before peace is finally restored. Our immediate concern, however, is the picture he presents as he is about to undertake the business of the day.

The man in whom Rousseau is most interested is, of course, himself. We catch fleeting glimpses of him throughout the story of the *Confessions*, first as a young man, and then as he later appears bowed with the weight of long years of suffering. These flashes are sketchy, at their best, but they at least serve to give some idea of the physical appearance of our author. He describes himself as he was at the time of his first meeting with Madame de Warens.

J'étois au milieu de ma seizième année. Sans être ce qu'on appelle un beau garçon, . . . j'avois . . . l'air dégagé, la physionomie animée, la bouche mignonne, les sourcils et les cheveux noirs, les yeux petits et même enfoncés, . . .<sup>26</sup>

The next time he speaks of himself in detail is upon the occasion of his baptism into the Roman Catholic faith, a conversion which is nothing more than a formal gesture on his part, and which he does not regard seriously. He wears a special gown for the ceremony.

J'étois revêtu d'une certaine robe grise, garnie de brandebourgs blancs, et destinée pour ces sortes d'occasions.<sup>27</sup>

After a series of adventures and temporary positions, he is sent to Paris to serve as companion to the nephew of a friend of his master's. He hopes for advancement and success, and as he makes his way toward the city of his dreams, he builds magnificent castles in the air.

Je croyois déjà me voir en habit d'officier avec un beau plumet blanc.<sup>28</sup>

Needless to say, his wild expectations do not come true; in later years, when he has made his way among the *philosophes*, he is still on the narrow edge of economic stability, partly because of Thérèse and her family, partly because of his own lack of application. His health is also badly impaired, and in an effort to regain his strength, he submits to all kinds of treatments offered or suggested by his numerous friends. They are of no avail, however, for,

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

Plus je m'asservissois à leur direction, plus je devenois jaune, maigre, foible."<sup>28</sup>

One last glimpse shows him an aging man, reliving in memory some of the happy experiences of his boyhood. The contrast presented in his present condition gives rise to bitter reflections on the adversity of fortune, but for a moment his eyes light up as he is carried back to his care-free years.

Mon sang s'allume et petille, la tête me tourne, malgré mes cheveux déjà grisonnans, et voilà le grave citoyen de Genève, voilà l'austère Jean-Jacques, à près de quarante-cinq ans, redevenu tout à coup le berger extravagant."<sup>29</sup>

These fleeting pictures give us glimpses of many of Rousseau's associates, and of himself, throughout his career. Some receive greater emphasis than others; all, however, are realistic, even though their details are reduced to a minimum. In the longer passages, his characterizations are often vivid. In the case of creatures of fiction, the same principle holds true, with the added criticism of artificiality. His treatment of the miniature of Julie in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* shows his preference for the simple, the natural, the unmodified beauty of a youthful face, which, when improved upon, loses its freshness and appeal.

In studying the question of portraiture, I think it is interesting to note the contrast in method and in effect as it is achieved by another writer, a contemporary who left his mark upon Rousseau, namely, Samuel Richardson. His *Clarissa Harlowe* made a strong impression upon Rousseau, the echo of which appears in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. Richardson's technique differs considerably from Rousseau's in certain respects, especially with regard to his character sketches. He has an eye for those physical reactions which, to the practiced observer, reveal a person's sentiments or state of mind, as well as for precision in his descriptions of feminine costumes.

There are many examples of this in *Clarissa Harlowe*, ranging from the life-like reproduction of an individual to caricature. They are too numerous to be indicated here in their entirety, but a few selections may not be out of place as illustrations of his highly successful system.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.



Early in the story, Robert Lovelace gives us a picture of his lovely Clarissa.

Her wax-like flesh . . . by its delicacy and firmness, answers for the soundness of her health. Thou hast often heard me launch out in praise of her complexion. I never in my life beheld a skin so *illustriously* fair. The lily and the driven snow it is nonsense to talk of: her lawn and her laces one might indeed compare to those; but what a whited wall would a woman appear to be, who had a complexion which would justify such unnatural comparisons? But this lady is all glowing, all charming flesh and blood; yet so clear, that every meandering vein is to be seen in all the lovely parts of her which custom permits to be visible.

Thou hast heard me also describe the wavy ringlets of her shining hair, needing neither art nor powder; of itself an ornament, defying all other ornaments; wantoning in and about a neck that is beautiful beyond description.<sup>80</sup>

Not content with these remarks, he also describes the gown she is wearing upon this particular occasion. It may seem overly gay to us as we read of it now, yet the careful enumeration of its many features leaves no doubt as to the sincerity and veracity of the portrait.

Her head-dress was a Brussels-lace mob, peculiarly adapted to the charming air and turn of her features. A sky-blue ribband illustrated that . . .

Her morning gown was a pale primrose-coloured paduasoy: the cuffs and robins curiously embroidered . . . in a running pattern of violets and their leaves, the light in the flowers silver, gold in the leaves. A pair of diamond snaps in her ears. A white handkerchief . . .

Her ruffles were the same as her mob. Her apron a flowered lawn. Her coat white sattin, quilted: blue sattin her shoes, braided with the same color, without lace . . . neat buckles in them: and on her charming arms a pair of black velvet glove-like muffs of her own invention . . . Her hands velvet of themselves, . . . uncovered . . .<sup>81</sup>

Richardson is equally successful in analyzing one's mental condition, his or her *état d'âme* as it is disclosed through outward manifestations of it, such as gestures, posture, agitation or restrained movements. We see Clarissa, for example, in the depths of despair. She has no interest in concealing her sentiments, but rather gives vent to them in a most touching and heart-rending way.

<sup>80</sup> S. Richardson, *Clarissa Harlowe*, Chapman and Hall, Ltd., London, 1902, v. III, p. 57.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

She was distressed . . . She owned herself unequal to the conflict. She sighed. She sobbed. She wept. She wrung her hands . . . Her tearful eyes were cast down upon me; a glow upon each charming cheek; a visible languish in every lovely feature—at last her trembling knees seeming to fall her, she dropt into the next chair; her charming face, . . . sinking upon her own shoulder."<sup>22</sup>

John Belford presents an even more pathetic picture of the unhappy Clarissa at a later point in the story. Ill, dying, she languishes in the arms of a kind and motherly friend. She is as though suspended between the living and the dead, for although she still breathes, her features are rapidly assuming that aspect which is typical of those whose souls have departed this life of toil and woe.

We beheld the lady in a charming attitude. Dressed . . . in her virgin white. She was sitting in her elbow-chair, Mrs. Lovick close by her, in another chair, with her left arm round her neck, . . .

One faded cheek rested upon the good woman's bosom, the kindly warmth of which had overspread it with a faint, but charming flush; the other paler and hollow, as if already iced over by death. Her hands white as the lily, with her meandering veins more transparently blue than ever I had seen even her's, (veins so soon, alas! to be choked up by the congelment of that purple stream, which already so languidly creeps, rather than flows, through them!) her hands hanging lifelessly, one before her, the other grasped by the right-hand of the kind widow, . . . her aspect was sweetly calm and serene: and though she started now and then, yet her sleep seemed easy; her breath, indeed short and quick; but tolerably free, and not like that of a dying person."<sup>23</sup>

The painful realism of such pathetic scenes is occasionally tempered by a lighter, even comical note. It is the impetuous Lovelace himself who sketches this picture of a "vixen" who crosses his path, causing him annoyance and frustrating his villainous plans. His anger explodes in this cruel caricature of a figure who apparently is not overly blessed with physical pulchritude. It is Mrs. Sinclair.

She set her huge arms akembo . . . [Clarissa] . . . was frighted at her masculine air, and fierce look . . .

The old dragon straddled up to her, with her arms kemboed again—her eye-brows erect, like the bristles upon a hog's back, and, scouling over her shortened nose, more than half-hid her ferret-eyes. Her mouth

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, v. V, p. 337.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, v. VIII, pp. 331-332.

was distorted. She pouted out her blubber-lips, as if to bellows up wind, and sputter into her horse-nostrils; and her chin was curdled, and more than usually prominent with passion.<sup>54</sup>

Mrs. Sinclair is a revolting person, with daughters who are no more attractive than herself. John Belford spares neither sarcasm nor criticism in his judgment of them,<sup>55</sup> but he heaps his most cruel satire upon the hapless old woman. He makes her appear almost as hideous and as horrible as some witch in a fairy-tale; one shudders at the spectacle of her, an invalid and confined to her bed.

Her misfortune had not at all sunk, but rather, as I thought, increased her flesh; rage and violence perhaps swelling her muscular features. Behold her, then, spreading the whole troubled bed with her huge quaggy carcase: her mill-post arms held up; her broad hands clenched with violence; her big eyes, goggling and flaming red as we may suppose those of a salamander; her matted griesly hair, made irreverend by her wickedness (her clouted head-dress being half off, spread about her fat ears and brawny neck;) her livid lips parched, and working violently; her broad chin in convulsive motion; her wide mouth, by reason of the contraction of her forehead (which seemed to be half-lost in its frightful furrows) splitting her face, as it were, into two parts; and her huge tongue hideously rolling in it; heaving, puffing as if for breath; her bellows-shaped and various-coloured breasts ascending by turns to her chin, and descending out of sight, with the violence of her gaspings.<sup>56</sup>

This is Richardsonian realism in its most trenchant form. Such superlative ugliness seems fantastic, yet within the realm of possibility at the same time.

This profusion of sketches is a characteristic of the English writer which is not reproduced in his French contemporary. Rousseau's interests lie elsewhere rather than in the close description of individuals, for, in his fictional, as well as in his autobiographical works, there is always another problem behind the subject under immediate discussion. In the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, he is striving toward the presentation of a whole mode of life; in his *Confessions*, his acquaintances are incidental to his personal experiences.

Among his immediate associates, one should also consider Denis Diderot, who creates animated and effective portraits in

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, v. VI, p. 74.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, v. IX, pp. 64-65.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, v. IX, p. 66.

such studies of human nature as his *Neveu de Rameau*, *Jacques le Fataliste* and *La Religieuse*. His use of gestures in the first of these, for example, injects a new note in this descriptive style and has an influence on its subsequent development.

In conclusion, we observe that Rousseau's attitude toward people is similar to that concerning the world of nature. He seeks unaffected, spontaneous beauty, and avoids artificiality. The first hint of deliberate striving for effect spoils his pleasure and causes him to turn to more genuine specimens.

As for his use of colors, they appear more frequently in the instances which we have studied in this chapter than in his landscapes. Their range remains restricted, however, with a resultant uniformity of technique with which he seems entirely satisfied.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ELEMENTS OF ROUSSEAU'S

#### *Sentiment de la Nature*

In considering Rousseau's descriptive technique, with regard to both the world of nature and individuals, I have studied his application of a number of principles by means of which he paints his pictures. Since his point of departure is essentially the sensationalistic theory, one perhaps expects him to make frequent reference to it. As I have already indicated in chapters III and IV, he observes its tenets only to a certain degree. Then, because his attention becomes fixed upon other considerations, his method changes; this, quite obviously, has an influence upon the total effect of his exposition.

There are at least two definite factors which figure in this aspect of his writing. One is his keen perception of physical impulses, predominatingly visual; this appears especially when he is pointing out to a second person what is before him. His remarks reveal an appreciation of order, balance and regularity in a landscape. He finds them attractive, however, only when they are of spontaneous or 'natural' origin. He has a feeling of aversion for those cultivated tracts where plants have been trained out of their usual manner of growth in an effort to create an artificial kind of beauty.

His thoughts usually pass beyond these items, for he is more disposed toward the enjoyment of the general effect of a scene than toward the notation of its specific features. The whole as a unit, with the confusion of impression with which it is accompanied, is, in the last analysis, more appealing to Rousseau. This is due, in large measure, to his great love of day-dreaming, a condition which nothing induces more quickly than some unspoiled nook in the world of nature. Once he has given himself up to its vague and indeterminate charm, he no longer considers its source.

It is my purpose in this chapter to study the material which is at hand, from these two points of view, for together they weave the spell of that indefinite, yet delightful experience partly physical, partly emotional and partly intellectual, which is known

as his *sentiment de la nature*. As the first has its bearing upon the second in more than one respect, I think we should take it as our starting point. One is prepared for the assertion that Rousseau makes a note of external impulses only to a minor degree. Colors come foremost, with blue, white and green, plus an occasional gray or red, constituting the palette from which he paints his outdoor scenes.

In the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, one gathers a general idea of the majestic beauty of the Alps which are the setting for the story, but aside from the passages upon which I have commented in chapter III, details of landscapes are infrequent. At the first request of Julie that Saint-Preux absent himself for a time, she urges him to go at once, as the season is late.

Quoique l'automne soit encore agréable ici, vous voyez déjà blanchir la pointe de la dent-de-jamant, . . .<sup>1</sup>

This might possibly be considered not so much an attempt to describe a scene, as to serve as a convincing argument which Julie uses to her advantage. The following quotation, however, contains at least the germ of a brilliant description. Rousseau, however, maintains an impersonal attitude in the matter, for he is posing merely as the 'editor' of these love-letters. His remarks indicate the potential qualities of the scene, but as his attention is centered on something else, he does no more than refer to it in passing.

Saint-Preux takes Julie up into the mountains; he points out to her the century-old glaciers caught in rocks and crevasses. Rousseau's footnote completes the picture.

Ces montagnes sont si hautes qu'une demi heure après le soleil couché leurs sommets sont encore éclairés de ses rayons, dont le rouge forme sur ces cimes blanches une belle couleur de rose qu'on apperçoit de fort loin.\*

Here we have the most vivid notations of color in any of Rousseau's landscape descriptions. This, in itself, is an observation made in passing, which could be developed much more, for Rousseau is aware, not only of the beauty of the region, but also of the fact that it is radiated far and wide. He notes the reflection of the sunset upon the highest peaks, and realizes that this can be seen from a great distance. He makes no attempt, however, to develop the theme.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, v. II, p. 58.

\* *Ibid.*, v. III, p. 285.

Another occasion when nature comes to the fore in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* is when Saint-Preux visits the estate of Julie, now Madame de Wolmar. Her bower and bird sanctuary are sources of unending delight and admiration for him, and in his account of them we see once again the familiar technique of Rousseau. Saint-Preux writes with such a rush of emotions and with such a detailed enumeration of plants and flowers that one is overwhelmed with the abundance of growth which has been crowded into the restricted area. Our reaction is that of Saint-Preux himself: this is a charming spot, but it is too luxuriant a garden to appear original and unsophisticated. Listing many of the items is a characteristic of Rousseau which we have noticed before; but the fact that the whole is not an entirely spontaneous arrangement detracts somewhat from its charm.

Le gazon verdoyant, épais, mais court et serré étoit mêlé de serpolet, de baume, de thim, de marjolaine, et d'autres herbes odorantes.<sup>3</sup>

He examines more closely the lush vegetation which borders the paths:

Alors seulement je découvris, non sans surprise que ces ombrages verts et touffus qui m'en avoient tant imposé de loin, n'étoient formés que de ces plantes rampantes et parasites qui, guidées le long des arbres, environnoient leurs têtes du plus épais feuillage et leurs pieds d'ombre et de fraîcheur.<sup>4</sup>

The clever control of the water which runs through this wilderness contributes to the condition of its different sections.

. . . la terre ainsi rafraîchie et humectée donnoit sans cesse de nouvelles fleurs et entretenoit l'herbe toujours verdoyante et belle.<sup>5</sup>

Saint-Preux cannot admire the little haven enough. While his curiosity is aroused by the mechanics of it, however, he is puzzled by the apparent lack of any formal cultivation.

. . . je ne vois nulle part la moindre trace de culture. Tout est verdoyant, frais, vigoureux, et la main du jardinier ne se montre point . . .<sup>6</sup>

He returns to the question of the countless plants which flourish here. This is reminiscent of certain passages of the *Rêveries*, where Rousseau indicates with precision the flowers he discovers on botanical excursions.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Dans les lieux plus découverts, je voyois çà et là sans ordre et sans symétrie des broussailles de roses, de framboisiers, de groseilles, des fourrés de lilas, de noisetier, de sureau, de seringa, de genêt, de trifolium, qui paroient la terre en lui donnant l'air d'être en friche. Je suivois des allées tortueuses et irrégulières bordées de ces bocages fleuris, et couvertes de mille guirlandes de vigne de Judée, de vigne vierge, de houblon, de liseron, de couleuvrée, de clématite, et d'autres plantes de cette espèce, parmi lesquelles le chèvrefeuil et le jasmin daignoient se confondre.<sup>7</sup>

Such a display is too diversified for one to study each detail carefully. This rapid enumeration gives an impression of pleasant confusion, a sentiment which Rousseau doubtless experiences many times.

The bird-sanctuary is located in a section of the bower which has been constructed especially for it. In one corner there rises a slight eminence where skillful landscaping has yielded happy results. It is

. . . une monticule garnie d'une multitude d'arbrisseaux de toute espèce . . . Sur le devant étoient une douzaine d'arbres jeunes encore mais faits pour devenir fort grands, tels que le hêtre, l'orme, le frêne, l'acacia. C'étoient les bocages de ce côteau qui servoient d'asile à cette multitude d'oiseaux . . .<sup>8</sup>

M. et Madame de Wolmar show themselves to be true lovers of nature and of all its creatures. For them, this nook belongs to its winged inhabitants; they themselves are tolerated among their feathered friends only upon good behavior. They provide for them by planting special beds of grain.

Vous voyez à droite et à gauche de l'allée qui y conduit deux espaces remplis d'un mélange confus d'herbes, de pailles, et de toutes sortes de plantes. Elle y fait semer chaque année du bled, du mil, du tournesol, du chénevis, des pesettes, généralement de tous les grains que les oiseaux aiment, et l'on n'en moissonne rien.<sup>9</sup>

M. de Wolmar initiates his guest into one last secret. Saint-Preux is surprised at the apparent lack of formal gardening; the effect is achieved by careful attention at the proper time, and is heightened by the clever masking of the wall of the enclosure itself.

Ces deux côtés, . . . étoient fermés par des murs; les murs ont été masqués, non par des espaliers, mais par d'épais arbrisseaux qui font

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 229-230.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.



prendre les bornes du lieu pour le commencement d'un bois. Des deux autres côtés règnent de fortes hayes vives, bien garnies d'érable, d'aubépine, de houx, de troesne, et d'autres arbrisseaux mélangés qui leur ôtent l'apparence de hayes et leur donnent celle d'un taillis.<sup>10</sup>

Up to this point, we have considered only the fictional landscape, one which takes its origin in Rousseau's mind as he writes the story of Julie and Saint-Preux. Turning to his *Confessions*, we find an echo of his own reaction to a scene which he knew and loved. His familiar attitude reappears: a delightful vagueness of impression invades his senses; in this instance, it is reinforced through its marked contrast with his former surroundings. He tells of his return to Madame de Warens after having failed to make his way without her help. She receives him graciously, and deciding to keep him with her, gives him a room which commands a view of the open country. He has never forgotten it.

. . . au delà du ruisseau et des jardins on découvroit la campagne. Cet aspect n'étoit pas pour le jeune habitant une chose indifférente. C'étoit depuis Bossey la première fois que j'avois du vert devant mes fenêtres. Toujours masqué par des murs, je n'avois eu sous les yeux que des toits ou le gris des rues. Combien cette nouveauté me fut sensible et douce! . . . Je faisois de ce charmant paysage encore un des bienfaits de ma chère patronne . . . je la voyois partout entre les fleurs et la verdure; ces charmes et ceux du printemps se confondoient à mes yeux.<sup>11</sup>

His old haunts compare unfavorably with this beautiful region. This, in itself, contributes to his happiness; the presence of Madame de Warens completes the picture, she, *les fleurs et la verdure* create an atmosphere with which [*les charmes*] *du printemps se confondoient à mes yeux*.

In the *Rêveries*, he tells us of the pleasure he derives in rousing from reverie. Just as everything about him helped induce it, so does he reawaken to a *milieu* of which he never tires. He feels himself so at one with these elements that in his return to full consciousness, the borderline between dreaming and reality is difficult to determine.

En sortant d'une longue et douce rêverie, me voyant entouré de verdure, de fleurs, d'oiseaux, et laissant errer mes yeux au loin sur les romanesques rivages qui bordoient une vaste étendue d'eau claire et cristalline,

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>11</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 73.

j'assimilois à mes fictions tous ces aimables objets; et, me trouvant enfin ramené par degrés à moi-même et à ce qui m'entourait, je ne pouvois marquer le point de séparation des fictions aux réalités, . . .<sup>13</sup>

The sequel to a *longue et douce rêverie* brings its own delights with it. It, too, is a process of adaptation, *j'assimilois à mes fictions tous ces aimables objets*, with which he identifies himself. This absorption of his personality is only temporary, however, for he later resumes full control of all his faculties.

If we consider for a moment his earnest interest in botany, we are able to detect an accent of protest in his attitude toward the man who seeks plants primarily for their medicinal purposes. Such an individual has a distorted conception of his subject matter; he no longer appreciates its aesthetic appeal because of his more learned activities. The latter violate the peaceful sanctuary offered to those who wish for solitude and seclusion. His condemnation of these students of nature is harsh, for he has no desire to see it exploited for whatever reason, nor can he regard the herb-hunters in any other light than as disturbers of the serenity and beauty of the countryside.

Ces idées médicinales ne sont assurément guère propres à rendre agréable l'étude de la botanique; elles flétrissent l'émail des prés, l'éclat des fleurs, dessèchent la fraîcheur des bocages, rendent la verdure et les ombrages insipides et dégoûtans; toutes ces structures charmantes et gracieuses intéressent fort peu quiconque ne veut que piler tout cela dans un mortier, et l'on n'ira pas chercher des guirlandes pour les bergères parmi les herbes pour les lavemens.<sup>14</sup>

He goes on to say that he has never been tempted by this professional approach to flowers and roots. He has remained utterly unattracted by it, content to gather his own specimens at his leisure; he recalls a particularly fruitful excursion.

Je traversai jusqu'à Charonne le riant paysage . . . puis je fis un détour pour revenir par les mêmes prairies, . . . Je m'amusois à les parcourir . . . m'arrêtant quelquefois à fixer des plantes dans la verdure. J'en aperçus deux que je voyois assez rarement autour de Paris, et que je trouvai très-abondantes dans ce canton-là. L'une est le *Picris hieracioides*, de la famille des composées, et l'autre le *Bupleuron falcatum*, de celle des ombellifères. Cette découverte me réjouit et m'amusa très-longtemps, et finit par celle d'une plante encore plus rare, surtout dans un pays élevé, savoir le *Cerastium aquaticum*, que, . . . j'ai retrouvé dans un livre que j'avois sur moi, et placé dans mon herbier.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Rêveries*, v. IX, p. 364.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 375-376.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332.

I have given these selections from three of Rousseau's major compositions in order to show the extent to which colors actually figure in his descriptive writing. They are relatively few and of secondary importance only, for their function is essentially to create the background against which he moves. As its general effect is largely vague and indistinct, this pictorial element remains so, likewise.

This also holds true for the other sensory notations which appear. Indications of light, sound, perfumes and odors, and touch are infrequent and usually brief. As they are easily to be identified, it may be well to pass them in review at this point.

The first to which I call attention, auditory perceptions, have a strong appeal for Rousseau. His frame of mind influences his interpretation of them; a song coming from a distance in the country fills him with longing to lead a rustic life, while the mechanical clicking of a factory situated in the mountains completely destroys the peace and quiet he had found in a secluded nook. A torrent shatters the silence as it tumbles down the mountain side whence Saint-Preux looks out to Julie's abode, and the twittering and chirping of the birds in her bower fill him with unspeakable joy.

The most specific reference to touch is to be found in a footnote by the 'editor' of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and, in this particular case, he makes use of it as a means of definition rather than as an account of an actual sensation. It appears in connection with the word *rêche*, which Julie uses in describing the temperament of the Englishman, Milord Bomston. Rousseau is careful to explain its application here.

Terme du pays, pris ici métaphoriquement. Il signifie au propre une surface rude au toucher et qui cause un frissonnement désagréable en y passant la main, comme celle d'une brosse fort serrée ou du velours d'Utrecht.<sup>15</sup>

Olfactory stimuli are somewhat more numerous, although they, too, are seldom developed. The *herbes odorantes* of Julie's bower have already been mentioned in another connection,<sup>16</sup> and Saint-Preux also speaks of a perfume which is the more subtle and the more appealing as he tries actually to analyze it. Its fragrance is intoxicating, as much through association

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, v. II, p. 149.

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 124.

as through the sensation itself. He tells of it early in the story of their love; he has come to Julie's room for a midnight rendez-vous. This is, for him, a thrilling experience, and he avidly drinks in impressions of his surroundings.

Oui, tous mes sens y sont enivrés à la fois. Je ne sais quel parfum presque insensible, plus doux que la rose, et plus léger que l'iris s'exhale ici de toutes parts. J'y crois entendre le son flateur de ta voix.<sup>17</sup>

The keenness of Rousseau's own nostrils elicits a comment from Denis Diderot in the *Phénomènes*, which are supplementary to his *Lettre sur les aveugles*. He says,

J'en pourrais citer un [aveugle] qui nuance des bouquets avec cette délicatesse dont Jean-Jacques Rousseau se piquait lorsqu'il confiait à ses amis, sérieusement ou par plaisanterie, le dessein d'ouvrir une école où il donnerait leçons aux bouquetières de Paris.<sup>18</sup>

Rousseau records less agreeable experiences with equal candor. His first visit to Paris brings him to the big city by way of a mean and wretched *faubourg*; the filthy and ill-smelling streets are such a bitter disappointment that he can never regain the dream of the golden city which he had once imagined he would find at the end of his journey.

En entrant par le faubourg Saint-Marceau, je ne vis que de petites rues sales et puantes, de vilaines maisons noires, l'air de la malpropreté, de la pauvreté, des mendiants, . . .<sup>19</sup>

His senses are shocked by the unpleasant conditions which he witnesses: sights, odors and colors all blend in a desperately drab and forlorn impression of a poor section of the city. So strong is their effect upon him, that their memory remains with him always.

The Opera at Paris is another disappointment. Saint-Preux writes to Julie about it, mercilessly exposing the machinery and tawdry decorations which make performances something to be endured rather than enjoyed. The illumination of the stage is as revolting as it is unsatisfactory.

On voit vers le bas de la machine l'illumination de deux ou trois chandelles puantes et mal mouchées, qui, tandis que le personnage se démeûne et crie en branlant dans son escarpolette, l'enfument tout à son aise. Encens digne de la divinité.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. II, p. 183.

<sup>19</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 113.

<sup>18</sup> Diderot, *Oeuvres*, v. I, p. 332.

<sup>20</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. II, p. 391.

More important and more effective than these isolated notations, however, is the scene which Rousseau paints by means of general, undifferentiated sensations. These, a composite of many individual factors, reflect far better his usual technique and his personal attitude: the sum total of many items, *le tout*, has a greater appeal for him than any of its constituent parts. Since he reacts to these impulses *en masse*, he enjoys a *sensation délicieuse* because of its undefinable qualities. The following quotation is a characterization of those experiences from which he derives the most pleasure.

Je pris goût à cette récréation des yeux qui, dans l'infortune, repose, amuse, distrait l'esprit et suspend le sentiment des peines. La nature des objets aide beaucoup à cette diversion, et la rend plus séduisante. Les odeurs suaves, les vives couleurs, les plus élégantes formes, semblent se disputer à l'envi le droit de fixer notre attention. Il ne faut qu'aimer le plaisir pour se livrer à des sensations si douces . . .<sup>21</sup>

The two best illustrations which he gives of this are in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* and the *Émile*. Julie's bower provides a new thrill for Saint-Preux despite the fact that he has just encircled the globe and has returned filled with stories of strange lands; sunrise in the country is something every Émile should witness, for the exercise and development of the senses are the basis for all subsequent intellectual, moral and religious growth. How can he be made aware of the beauty and mystery of the universe better than by observing one of the most wonderful sights of the natural world? Rousseau argues that one cannot instil in a child an appreciation of these things; he must come to realize them for himself, and he will eventually be a better member of society for it.

Saint-Preux is introduced into Julie's breath-taking garden with an air of quiet mystery. He is overwhelmed by a host of impressions which crowd in upon one another too numerous to receive individual notation.

En entrant dans ce prétendu verger, je fus frappé d'une agréable sensation de fraîcheur que d'obscurs ombrages, une verdure animée et vive, des fleurs éparses de tous côtés, un gazouillement d'eau courante et le chant de mille oiseaux portèrent à mon imagination du moins autant qu'à mes sens . . .<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Rêveries*, v. IX, p. 375.

<sup>22</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. III, p. 224.

His interest and admiration increase as he becomes accustomed to this magnificent display of plant life.

Plus je parcourois cet agréable azile, plus je sentoie augmenter la sensation délicieuse que j'avois éprouvée en y entrant . . ."

We involuntarily feel the cool attractiveness of this little spot. We sense it in the manner of Saint-Preux, perceiving everything at once: sights, sounds, colors, odors, all are present but none receives particular mention, because they all make up the whole, which fixes our attention.

It is when Rousseau speaks as a pedagogue, however, that we see the full import of his emphasis on physical stimuli, for in this connection he not only gives us one of his most striking landscapes, but he also adds his interpretation of it as well. On such an event may be built much of a child's subsequent behavior. The ultimate responsibility for this lies with the tutor. His is the task of leading his pupil through a childhood of properly graded sensory experiences, from which he is eventually to emerge full-grown and ready to take his place in society.

This remarkable lesson for *Émile* is a sunrise viewed from a favorable vantage-point. The boy and his master arrive before the dawn. We are told of its approach, of the scene which emerges from the shadows of the night, of the flood of external impulses which pour in upon the unsuspecting observer.

On le voit s'annoncer [le soleil] de loin par les traits de feu qu'il lance au-devant de lui. L'incendie augmente, l'orient paroît tout en flammes: à leur éclat on attend l'astre longtemps avant qu'il se montre: à chaque instant on croit le voir paroître; on le voit enfin. Un point brillant part comme un éclair, et remplit aussitôt tout l'espace; le voile des ténèbres s'efface et tombe. L'homme reconnoît son séjour, et le trouve embelli. La verdure a pris durant la nuit une vigueur nouvelle; le jour naissant qui l'éclaire, les premiers rayons qui la dorent, la montrent couverte d'un brillant réseau de rosée, qui réfléchit à l'oeil la lumière et les couleurs. Les oiseaux en chœur se réunissent et saluent de concert le père de la vie; en ce moment pas un seul ne se tait; leur gazouillement, foible encore, est plus lent et plus doux que dans le reste de la journée, il se sent de la langueur d'un paisible réveil. Le concours de tous ces objets porte aux sens une impression de fraîcheur qui semble pénétrer jusqu'à l'âme."

What is the meaning of all this? Is it not enough simply to be exposed to these fleeting sensations at the beginning of a

" *Ibid.*, p. 229.

" *Émile*, v. II, pp. 138-139.

new day? Is it not sufficient to consider them as things whose intrinsic value lies in their sheer beauty? No, says Rousseau. Their importance is in the rôle they play in forming the background of a child, the foundation which will serve as the basis of comparison for all subsequent experiences. A single event is meaningless for him who knows of nothing with which to contrast it.

Il faut une expérience qu'il n'a point acquise, il faut des sentimens qu'il n'a point éprouvés, pour sentir l'impression composée qui résulte à la fois de toutes ces sensations.<sup>25</sup>

It is a practical problem in religious education which Rousseau proposes here. Without a relative point of view which is acquired only through contact with different ways of life,

. . . comment goûtera-t-il l'air frais d'une belle matinée? comment le parfum des fleurs, le charme de la verdure, l'humide vapeur de la rosée, le marcher mol et doux sur la pelouse enchanteront-ils ses sens? Comment le chant des oiseaux lui causera-t-il une émotion voluptueuse, . . . Avec quels transports verra-t-il naître une si belle journée, . . . Enfin comment s'attendrira-t-il sur la beauté du spectacle de la nature, s'il ignore quelle main prit soin de l'orner? <sup>26</sup>

This, then, is the essence of the appeal of the external world: it not only makes us conscious of our own existence, but impresses upon us all the more forcibly the majesty and dignity of the Intelligence which must be back of all things. One's recognition of this fact leads him straight to God; Rousseau's own *sentiment de la nature* culminates in this same lofty end. As a sensitive soul, he must have the comforting thought of a Protector upon whom to rely; he is aware of this Presence through its endless manifestations everywhere. Lost in the meditation which they inspire in him, he becomes unmindful of its source. He comes eventually to seek the *raison d'être* of the system in which he and his fellow-men live. This, in turn, is but one aspect of the deeper and larger concept of the Spirit which has created and which animates the cosmos.

While he is unable and unwilling to adopt either an atheistic or an agnostic point of view, he is, on the other hand, satisfied with a general and not over-specified source of energy to which we all owe our existence. His thought moves in a cycle: his

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

feeling for the world of nature leads him to the recognition of the Being whose handiwork is revealed on every side. His daily life brings him into contact with this realm of beauty and mystery; conscious of the fact that neither he nor any other human could possibly have had any part in producing it, he acknowledges a Supreme Intelligence. He is content, in his own mind, that this sentiment should remain without further analysis; he is concerned with neither dogma nor creed, as he sees no necessity for it.

The genuinely spontaneous perception of this constitutes what is known as *la religion naturelle*. This attitude, if it may be so indicated, arises unsolicited in the heart of the pure and sincere. It does not depend upon either instruction or fostering; it is instinctive for whoever succeeds in losing himself in the contemplation of the world of marvels in which he lives, and from which man has deliberately turned to establish an artificial social order. An effort to regain a less pretentious mode of life, in bringing one closer to the natural order of things, inevitably helps one also to a clearer understanding of its mainspring and source of sustenance, God.

This concept, then, lies at the basis of Rousseau's interpretation of his surroundings, and its compelling urge draws his attention from their temporal and fleeting aspects to a deeper and more profound meditation upon their Creator. The life and animation in a landscape are not lost upon him; rather, he absorbs them as general impressions which lose their identity in his intellectual appreciation of that which has first come to his attention through physical stimuli. His mind soars on a plane higher than the valley at his feet or the mountains towering above him, and the colors, fragrance, and other sensations of which he is at first aware are mingled and fused in his loftier experience.

This is one of the joys which he derives from his favorite pastime of day-dreaming. He gives a simple, but eloquent account of it in his *Confessions*, where he dwells upon the attractions of the island of Saint-Pierre. Lost in the depths of such a picturesque region, he feels stirring within him that "indefinable something." His description of the lake ends with an open confession of the general emotional confusion which he invariably experiences upon the contemplation of such a scene.



J'ai toujours aimé l'eau passionnément et sa vue me jette dans une rêverie délicate, quoique souvent sans objet déterminé. Je ne manquois point à mon lever, lorsqu'il faisoit beau, de courir sur la terrasse humer l'air salubre et frais du matin, et planer des yeux sur l'horizon de ce beau lac, dont les rives et les montagnes qui le bordent enchantoient ma vue. Je ne trouve point de plus digne hommage à la Divinité que cette admiration muette qu'excite la contemplation de ses oeuvres, . . . Comment leur âme [des compagnards] ne s'élève-t-elle pas cent fois le jour avec extase à l'auteur des merveilles qui les frappent? . . . Mais il faut pour cela [pour Rousseau lui-même] que mes yeux soient frappés du ravissant spectacle de la nature . . . à l'aspect d'un beau paysage, je me sens ému sans pouvoir dire de quoi."

This tendency reaches its culmination in the *Émile*, in the *Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard*. Those aspects of his *sentiment de la nature* which appear elsewhere in his work are, as it were, the elemental features of his more extensive, all-embracing attitude. They are indicative of a mind which is trying to find itself and give an adequate account of its instinctive reactions towards the external world. They are separate pieces of the larger pattern of his moral and religious philosophy as a whole. Undefined, and elusive, they are the vague beginnings of a concept which grows in the course of his own development, to appear in full blossom in the story of the formation of the perfect individual, the ideal Rousseau. Through the *vicaire savoyard* he briefly retraces the scattered ideas which he has expressed, at intervals, in several places.

This analysis takes its inception from and centers around a landscape. Such is the setting chosen by the teacher who is a philosopher, and at the same time intensely human. This background would naturally be his choice, for here he finds the most congenial atmosphere. With this as a starting-point, he proceeds to sketch the history of his life, the exposé of which reveals his emotional and spiritual existence as well. Nature, in acting upon his delicate senses, leads him to recognize a superior intellectual hierarchy for which it, in turn, offers tangible and irrefutable evidence.

The scene which precipitates the discussion is in the typical manner of Rousseau. Its many notable features are blended into a whole of poetic import.

On étoit en été; nous nous levâmes à la pointe du jour. Il me mena hors de la ville, sur une haute colline, au-dessous de laquelle passoit le Rhône, dont on voyoit le cours à travers les fertiles rives qu'il baigne; dans l'éloignement, l'immense chaîne des Alpes couronnoit le paysage; les rayons du soleil levant rasoient déjà les plaines, et, projetant sur les champs par longues ombres les arbres, les coteaux, les maisons, enrichissoient de mille accidens de lumière le plus beau tableau dont l'oeil humain puisse être frappé. On eût dit que la nature étaloit à nos yeux toute sa magnificence pour en offrir le texte à nos entretiens.<sup>88</sup>

The *Vicaire savoyard* then retraces the story of his life, in order to present a logical picture of his own religious philosophy. His is a simple, unpretentious approach, for he is well aware of his limitations as a thinker and teacher. The first truth borne in upon him is that of his own existence, with its corollary, the recognition of external objects.

J'existe, et j'ai des sens par lesquels je suis affecté. Voilà la première vérité qui me frappe et à laquelle je suis forcé d'acquiescer.<sup>89</sup>

He is able to distinguish, to his satisfaction, between his identity as a personality and that of forces foreign to him.

Mes sensations se passent en moi, puisqu'elles me font sentir mon existence; mais leur cause m'est étrangère, puisqu'elles m'affectent malgré que j'en aie, et qu'il ne dépend de moi ni de les produire ni de les anéantir. Je conçois donc clairement que ma sensation qui est en moi, et sa cause ou son objet qui est hors de moi, ne sont pas la même chose.

Ainsi, non-seulement j'existe, mais il existe d'autres êtres, savoir, les objets de mes sensations; et quand ces objets ne seroient que des idées, toujours est-il vrai que ces idées ne sont pas moi.<sup>90</sup>

Reflections, comparison, perception of relationships follow as the logical sequence to these primary experiences.

Me voici déjà tout aussi sûr de l'existence de l'univers que de la mienne. Ensuite je réfléchis sur les objets de mes sensations; et, trouvant en moi la faculté de les comparer, je me sens doué d'une force active que je ne savais pas avoir auparavant.

Apercevoir, c'est sentir; comparer, c'est juger; juger et sentir ne sont pas la même chose. Par la sensation, les objets s'offrent à moi séparés, isolés, tels qu'ils sont dans la nature; par la comparaison, je les remue, je les transporte pour ainsi dire, je les pose l'un sur l'autre pour prononcer sur leur différence ou sur leur similitude, et généralement sur tous leurs rapports.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> *Emile*, v. II, p. 236.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

A sensation and its interpretation are also to be differentiated: one is the physical basis for the other, which is a mental process.

Quand les deux sensations à comparer sont aperçues, leur impression est faite, chaque objet est senti, les deux sont sentis, mais leur rapport n'est pas senti pour cela. Si le jugement de ce rapport n'étoit qu'une sensation, et me venoit uniquement de l'objet, mes jugemens ne me tromperoiént jamais, puisqu'il n'est jamais faux que je sente ce que je sens."

Thus he comes to study himself and his connection with the world about him.

The next step is his consideration of the phenomenon of motion in the universe. It must have a cause; there must be a will at work back of the external objects which are perceived by the senses.

Les premières causes du mouvement ne sont point dans la matière; elle reçoit le mouvement et le communique, mais elle ne le produit pas. Plus j'observe l'action et réaction des forces de la nature agissant les unes sur les autres, plus je trouve que, . . . il faut toujours remonter à quelque volonté pour première cause . . . les corps inanimés n'agissent que par le mouvement, et il n'y a point de véritables actions sans volonté . . . Je crois donc qu'une volonté meut l'univers et anime la nature. Voilà . . . mon premier article de foi."

This power must be further defined and limited; it cannot remain uncontrolled and unorganized, for then all would be either chaos or static inactivity, according to whether it tended in one direction in all things or in a different direction in each individual case. This spirit of animation must, in turn, be subjected to a higher force. This is the second point in the development of his philosophy.

Si la matière mue me montre une volonté, la matière mue selon de certaines lois me montre une intelligence; c'est mon second article de foi."

What evidence other than the deductions of reasoning gives proof of this principle? What demonstration substantiates it? The answer is in the world of nature all about us.

Agir, comparer, choisir, sont les opérations d'un être actif et pensant: donc cet être existe. Où le voyez-vous exister? m'allez-vous dire.

" *Ibid.*

" *Ibid.*, p. 244.

" *Ibid.*, p. 245.

Non-seulement dans les cieux qui roulent, dans l'astre qui nous éclaire, non-seulement dans moi-même, mais dans la brebis qui pait, dans l'oiseau qui vole, dans la pierre qui tombe, dans la feuille qu'emporte le vent."<sup>25</sup>

It is deliberate blindness on the part of any man to refuse to admit its existence.

. . . à quels yeux non prévenus l'ordre sensible de l'univers n'annonce-t-il pas une suprême intelligence? "<sup>26</sup>

Rousseau utterly rejects the theory of chance as an explanation for the life which is to be found in the cosmos. It appears to him illogical and without a sound basis. His senses are, first and last, the most valuable source for his judgment in this matter. His relationship with the outside world is made possible only through them; they serve as both demonstration and proof.

There is, then, a force in the universe which motivates the whole in coordinated rhythm, but which defies description or specification. As it is everywhere, it can be neither limited nor restricted. To this power, he gives the name of God; the intricacies of its definition, however, are beyond his comprehension or explanation. What does this name imply? Where does this source of energy exist and how does it exert itself? How am I conscious of it? The answer to some of these questions is instinctive; of others there seems to be no adequate solution.

J'aperçois Dieu partout dans ses oeuvres; je le sens en moi, je le vois tout autour de moi; mais sitôt que je veux le contempler en lui-même, sitôt que je veux chercher où il est, ce qu'il est, quelle est sa substance, il m'échappe, et mon esprit troublé n'aperçoit plus rien."<sup>27</sup>

There arises the problem of the place of man in this scheme of things. One's immediate reaction is to consider himself superior to all others. What basis is there for this selfish and egotistical point of view? Disregarding the sophistry of those eager to assume a rôle of authority, and following his own reasoning and instinct, Rousseau reaches a conclusion similar to theirs, but one which springs from an entirely different inspiration.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

. . . content de la place où Dieu m'a mis, je ne vois rien, après lui, de meilleur que mon espèce; et si j'avois à choisir ma place dans l'ordre des êtres, que pourrois-je choisir de plus que d'être homme? <sup>38</sup>

This situation fills him with gratitude and humility rather than with overweening pride. Who is he to have been singled out and placed above all creatures? There can be no doubt in his mind, however, as to the truth of this sentiment. He feels his distinction and excellence not as an individual, but as a man set over against all other forms of life. This is not a psychological rationalization on his part, but is rather a fact corroborated by nature.

Je n'ai pas besoin qu'on m'enseigne ce culte, il m'est dicté par la nature elle-même. N'est-ce pas une conséquence naturelle de l'amour de soi, d'honorer ce qui nous protège, et d'aimer ce qui nous veut du bien? <sup>39</sup>

Here the optimistic logic of our philosopher suffers its first serious rebuff. If man is the highest earthly being, both physically and mentally, how has he fallen so low as to establish the vicious society in which he lives? Neither the Higher Intelligence nor examples taken from the lower animals could ever have inspired him to erect such an artificial organization.

Le tableau de la nature ne m'offroit qu'harmonie et proportions, celui du genre humain ne m'offre que confusion, désordre! Le concert règne entre les élémens, et les hommes sont dans le chaos! Les animaux sont heureux, leur roi seul est misérable! O sagesse, où sont tes lois? O Providence, est-ce ainsi que tu régis le monde? Etre bien-faîtant, qu'est devenu ton pouvoir? Je vois le mal sur la terre.<sup>40</sup>

In the exposition of his theory, he then discusses at some length the essence of the relative freedom of man in the world as compared with other creatures. He enjoys a liberty of which he is the unique beneficiary. This lack of restraint, which Rousseau is careful to define, suffers abuse at the hands of some of those who are endowed with it, a fault which is to be charged to human frailty rather than to either over-generosity or indifference on the part of Divine Providence. This opportunity to seek and to find virtue is the most substantial proof of man's noble destiny.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

His ingenuity, selfishness and thirst for power, however, have made man vicious and unhappy. How different does he appear in corrupt society from the simpler son of the soil who is content to live with less extravagance and display.

... la nature a voulu que vous ne souffrissiez pas toujours. Combien l'homme vivant dans la simplicité primitive est sujet à peu de maux ! Il vit presque sans maladie ainsi que sans passion, et ne prévoit ni ne sent la mort, quand il la sent, ses misères la lui rendent désirable.  
...<sup>41</sup>

Returning to the distinguishing features of this Higher Intelligence, Rousseau is convinced that as God is all-powerful, He must therefore be merciful and good. Guided by these precepts which are instinctively felt within the human breast, he sees only one line of conduct open to him who would be kind, virtuous and successful in life. This is a simple rule, but a basic one.

*Sois juste et tu seras heureux.*<sup>42</sup>

This brings him to a discussion of the soul, its essence, its existence, its immortality. These are problems beyond his comprehension, as is the more fundamental concept of the attributes of God himself, whence springs this divine spark in man. Rousseau simply accepts them in unquestioning acquiescence; they also serve as a foundation for his personal conduct and the fulfillment of his destiny.

Après avoir ainsi, de l'impression des objets sensibles et du sentiment intérieur qui me porte à juger des causes selon mes lumières naturelles, déduit les principales vérités qu'il m'importoit de connoître, il me reste à chercher quelles maximes j'en dois tirer pour ma conduite, et quelles règles je dois me prescrire pour remplir ma destination sur la terre, selon l'intention de celui qui m'y a placé.<sup>43</sup>

Our conscience is our guide in all our human relationships, both individual and social. It is this inner voice which indicates instinctively the actions and attitudes we should take with regard to others; it is as infallible as it is necessary.

Elle est le vrai guide de l'homme; elle est à l'âme ce que l'instinct est au corps; qui la suit obéit à la nature et ne craint point de s'égarer.<sup>44</sup>

At this point he would seem to turn away from the principle

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

of the sensationalistic theory: if he admits this spontaneous urge from within, how can he continue to support the doctrine which denies the existence of innate ideas? As he anticipates this criticism, he hastens to define his terms: whereas we gain knowledge only through physical impulses, there are certain sentiments which we feel quite without the aid of external forces, and which make themselves manifest even before we are able to deduce coherent thought-patterns from our experiences. Among these impulsive reactions are self-esteem, a desire for comfort and well-being, with its corollary, the wish to avoid ill or harm, and that most intimate and secret something which he calls conscience.

Les actes de la conscience ne sont pas des jugemens, mais des sentimens; quoique toutes nos idées nous viennent du dehors, les sentimens qui les apprécient sont au-dedans de nous, et c'est par eux seuls que nous connoissons la convenance ou la disconvenance qui existe entre nous et les choses que nous devons rechercher ou fuir.

Exister, pour nous c'est sentir; notre sensibilité est incontestablement antérieure à notre intelligence, et nous avons eu des sentimens avant des idées. Quelle que soit la cause de notre être, elle a pourvu à notre conservation en nous donnant des sentimens convenables à notre nature; et l'on ne sauroit nier qu'au moins ceux-là ne soient innés.<sup>45</sup>

If this is potentially such a powerful force, why has it lost its control over men? Why is there so little evidence of its functioning in organized society? The reason for its apparent submersion is the change which has taken place in human hearts. They have wandered far from their original natural simplicity, and in the complications and competition of our artificial way of life, this intimate warning is often unheeded or even uncomprehended.

S'il parle [ce guide—la conscience] à tous les coeurs, pourquoi donc y en a-t-il si peu qui l'entendent? Eh! c'est qu'il nous parle la langue de la nature, que tout nous fait oublier. La conscience est timide, elle aime la retraite et la paix; le monde et le bruit l'épouvantent . . .<sup>46</sup>

In his own sincere effort to recapture his lost sense of justice and equity, and, consequently his happiness, Rousseau has recourse to meditation and to the contemplation of the manifestations of the Higher Existence which are all about him. He finds it expressed in the external world, to which he turns in a desire to

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

escape the pitfalls of erring mankind as well as to fortify his own character and courage.

. . . je m'exerce aux sublimes contemplations. Je médite sur l'ordre de l'univers, non pour l'expliquer par de vains systèmes, mais pour l'admirer sans cesse, pour adorer le sage auteur qui s'y fait sentir. Je converse avec lui, je pénètre toutes mes facultés de sa divine essence; je m'attends à ses bienfaits, je le bénis de ses dons . . ."

His young disciple recognizes this to be *la religion naturelle*, for which the *Vicaire savoyard* then makes an eloquent plea. What need is there of dogma or sect in the perception of a sentiment of divine inspiration? For those who are doubtful or hesitant, he has only to offer the whole universe as sufficient and conclusive evidence. The multiple divisions and definitions introduced by man have reduced his faith to an empty code or an involved and meaningless confusion of details. The objective and sincere contemplation of nature should have the power to reawaken in human hearts the recognition of this simpler, deeper and truer religion.

Les plus grandes idées de la Divinité nous viennent par la raison seule. Voyez le spectacle de la nature, écoutez la voix intérieure. Dieu n'a-t-il pas tout dit à nos yeux, à notre conscience, à notre jugement? Qu'est-ce que les hommes nous diront de plus? "

This removes from him the temptation to follow the teachings which others claim to be the sole means of finding God. All written accounts of things divine are based upon the experiences of mortals, which are often translated into foreign tongues, and upon the adaptation of ancient sources. This permits a wide margin of error, imposition, and imagination, if not deliberate falsification of texts. Of these he will have none: he has only to gaze upon the external world to perceive more directly and more perfectly the message of comfort and encouragement which his Creator has to offer him. Stories of miracles, revelations, or magical forces are incomprehensible to him; he bases his faith on the reasoning powers with which he is endowed by nature. Anything contrary to or unacceptable by this faculty must perforce be rejected. Although this lays him open to attack, his conviction is firm and sustains him in the face of all propaganda and persecution. He regards the zeal of missionaries



as futile and misdirected energy: every doctrine has its ministers, each of whom declares his particular version to be the only one founded on truth. All those who are beyond its pale are irrevocably damned and lost. This seems to him as absurd as it is presumptuous, for who is to say that his theory is superior to that of another who lives in a different society at the opposite ends of the earth? Pride and intolerance are the arch-enemies of sincere religious inspiration. The only way to escape them is to close all the books which have been compiled by men, and to consult more freely that exposition of the glory of God which lies before us at all times, spread out for the contemplation of those who will but look upon it.

J'ai donc refermé tous les livres. Il en est un seul ouvert à tous les yeux, c'est celui de la nature. C'est dans ce grand et sublime livre que j'apprends à servir et adorer son divin auteur. Nul n'est excusable de n'y pas lire, parce qu'il parle à tous les hommes une langue intelligible à tous les esprits."<sup>66</sup>

This inevitably leaves him an honest sceptic of the value of revelation. Unable to comprehend it or to acknowledge a necessity for it, he is content to leave it for those who feel that they can either accept it without question or interpret it to their own satisfaction. He is tolerant, however, and abstains from criticism, for who is he to say what others shall think and believe?

This is the essence of *la religion naturelle* of the *Vicaire savoyard*, and of Rousseau himself. Without pretending to be either a philosopher or a scholar of the antiquities, he has come to this conclusion through the use of his reasoning power coupled with his reaction to the original impressions which come in upon him from the external world. He is conscious of it, as well as of his own existence, through his physical senses; his mental powers which develop at a later period are influenced and controlled by these primary experiences. The combination of the two leads him back to the environment which gave rise to them: this is the realm of nature, which he recognizes as something exterior to himself and beyond his limited powers of creation. It must therefore be the expression of a force superior to him and to itself; this existence he calls God, and he has only to return to his favorite haunts to be reassured in this conviction. As this is

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

sufficient for him, it precludes the necessity of formal dogma or organized creed. The accounts which men give of the Divine are too contradictory among themselves to be able to maintain any absolute standard of truth. Rejecting them all, he returns to the unerring source of his inspiration, which lies before all men, offering demonstration and proof simultaneously.

He thus comes to recognize *la religion naturelle* as the only adequate basis for man's spiritual life. According to the exposé which he gives in the *Émile* of the development of his thought, he has reached this conclusion quite spontaneously and uninfluenced by external authority. Indeed, he comes to reject all forms of man-made doctrine when he becomes aware of the conflict between it and this inner sentiment which needs no creed or articles of faith through which to establish its supremacy.

The observations of M. Masson upon this aspect of Rousseau's philosophy offer an explanation for this individualistic attitude. In the first place, the theme is not new; it has been a favorite topic of discussion among thinkers and theorists from the time of Montaigne down to Rousseau's day.<sup>50</sup> It has even been more than the subject of abstract reasoning, for the ever-popular *récits de voyages* corroborate the existence of a similar concept among the primitive peoples of the world.<sup>51</sup> While some of these accounts treat of authentic tribes, others recount purely imaginary travels; but they all appear to advocate a return to it as the simplest, the most logical and the most enduring rule of life.<sup>52</sup>

Rousseau, however, departs from purely objective considerations, for his position, far from being that of a logician, is strongly flavored with sentimentality. His first outburst is emotional; only subsequently does he turn his attention to an ordered development of his thought. It is a conscious effort for him to

. . . intellectualiser ses sentiments, pour présenter en un corps de doctrine ce qui est avant tout, chez lui, instinct et impulsivité.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Masson, P. M., *La Religion de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Paris, 1916, Première Partie, p. 265, p. 272 ff.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Deuxième Partie, p. 83.

Even these observations which constitute the basis of Rousseau's religion and philosophy of life reflect the influence of his friends and associates. As M. Masson points out, there appear

. . . d'alluvions hétérogènes dans l'oeuvre qui s'achevait [*la Profession de foi*]: dissertations ingrates sur la sensation et sur le jugement, sur la matière et l'organisation de la vie, sur la nécessité et la liberté . . ."

In his discussion of Rousseau's *religion naturelle*, M. Masson emphasizes this aspect of what he subsequently formulates into a doctrine.

Pour qui l'examine de près, la *Profession de Foi* apparaît donc comme un manifeste sentimental, où nous ne devons pas trop chercher de cohésion intellectuelle, mais qui nous livre surtout les émotions d'une âme diversement agitée, quoique toujours selon le même mode."

To sum up his position, Rousseau's theme is nothing new to the intellectual circles of his day.

"C'est celui du théisme contemporain," animated with "un accent nouveau," that of sentimentality."

Here, as elsewhere, he would seem to serve as the connecting link between the realm of the theorist and current public opinion. He is a transitional figure, for, adopting the principles of the one group, he clothes them in the popular, unsophisticated approach of the other.

Rousseau's reaction toward nature is thus essentially personal and colored by emotion. Once he is alone in this world of limitless interest and inspiration, he is subjected to a series of influences which lead to his favorite occupation, reverie. The immediate effect of the scene before him gives rise to a corresponding mental attitude; as this has the stronger appeal, he becomes absorbed either in himself or in the consideration of his place in this order of things. The whole structure of his faith springs from these experiences, and his account of its various phases follows the line of development of his thought. Beginning with simple sensations, he advances through them to more abstract concepts. Thus, his *sentiment de la nature* is to be identified, to a certain extent, with his *religion naturelle*. His attention is withdrawn from his surroundings; this causes a shift of em-

" *Ibid.*

" *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84 and p. 92.

" *Ibid.*, p. 97.

phasis in his landscape descriptions. His notations of physical impulses and of other details of a pictorial quality are the starting point of a deeper and more engrossing contemplation of the secret of the universe. In seeking a solution to this problem, he derives spiritual strength from the spontaneous inspiration of *la religion naturelle*.

While it is not my purpose to discuss in greater detail the evolution of Rousseau's religious thought, these remarks would not be complete without considering the close study which M. Schinz has given the problem in *La Pensée de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Paris, 1929.<sup>57</sup> He establishes that the end and aim of Rousseau's philosophy is the quest of happiness here and now.

. . . le but qu'il propose à la vie: *le bonheur ici-bas, pas la vertu en soi, la vertu romaine, ou la vertu chrétienne de renoncement*.<sup>58</sup>

At times, he seems to prescribe the way of virtue as the means to this goal; in other instances, however, he refers to it in an essentially disciplinary sense. He alternates between making it,

. . . tantôt équivalente à jouissance, et tantôt équivalente à privation de jouissance, . . .<sup>59</sup>

Thus there is a confusion in Rousseau's mind which his subsequent arguments seek to clarify. He has recourse to a higher Being endowed with a strength and wisdom greater than those of man.

Il faut donc pour assurer la victoire et le bonheur, une puissance supérieure à celles de la nature et de la société, une puissance plus qu'humaine. Dieu seul est assez puissant pour garder les hommes contre eux-mêmes, contre leur nature, contre leur romantisme inné.

<sup>57</sup> See also his "La Pensée religieuse de Rousseau et ses récentes interprètes," *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages*, v. 10, no. 1, 1928-1930.

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 422; for a detailed study of the different types of *vertu* in Rousseau, see M. Schinz, "La Notion de *vertu* dans le premier Discours de Jean-Jacques Rousseau," *Mercure de France*, 1er juin, 1912; for the related subject, the concept of *la bonté naturelle*, see M. Schinz, "La théorie de la bonté naturelle de l'homme chez Rousseau," *Revue du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, v. I, 1913, and G. R. Havens, "The Theory of 'Naturel Goodness' in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*," *MLN*, v. 36, 1921.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 480.

C'est là, l'élément nouveau que ce chapitre de la Profession de foi doit apporter au système de Rousseau; il s'agit d'ajouter, de superposer le pragmatisme religieux au rationalisme moral.<sup>60</sup>

In his formulation of his articles of faith, the personal or subjective element plays an important part. His repudiation of formal dogma is not entirely disinterested, for the *lumière intérieure* which he puts in their place is conditioned, in its functioning, by the search for

. . . la réalisation du bonheur—et d'ailleurs pas d'un bonheur d'après vie, mais d'un bonheur terrestre autant que celui-ci est réalisable!<sup>61</sup>

This has its influence upon the attributes which he ascribes to God. There is a ". . . caractère fondamentalement pragmatique"<sup>62</sup> in his theology, for between his definition of "le Dieu-Volonté," "le Dieu-Intelligence" and "le dogme du Libre arbitre,"<sup>63</sup> he inserts the added consideration of the

. . . 'bonté divine' que ne nous suggère *pas* la raison philosophique pure, et que la lumière intérieure réclame, . . .<sup>64</sup>

In addition to this pragmatic element, there are also evidences of "la religion sentimentale" which is, according to M. Schinz, ". . . une simple superposition" in the *Profession de foi*.

C'est une religion de poète et non de philosophe.<sup>65</sup>

Rousseau's search for compromise, for the mean position between extremes, finds expression here as well as in his other fields of endeavor. He is, after all, only human, with weaknesses and faults, but possessing also a sincerity of conviction which urges him on to seek the reconciliation of

. . . l'existence du romantisme en l'homme qui aspire au bonheur, et la nécessité de discipliner la nature humaine pour réaliser ce bonheur . . .<sup>66</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 464.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 487.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 506.

## CONCLUSION

A survey of the results of this study of selected texts of Rousseau points to the following general conclusions concerning his method of procedure and expression. It appears that he is in no way an extremist, for his language, with the exception of occasional individualistic traits, usually remains within the range of current usage. His interest in the theory of sensationalism is inspired through his contacts with the *philosophes*, who adopt it as their point of departure in the foundation of their materialistic school. He participates in discussing various features of it, not only in his *Émile*, which is based essentially upon it, but also in his treatment of the question of the analogy between color and sound, both as a scientific and as an aesthetic phenomenon.

That aspect of Rousseau which commands our closest attention, however, is his interest in another sphere: the world of nature as he observes it and as he reacts to it. It has an unceasing attraction for him, and its spirit pervades much of his writing, particularly his fictional and autobiographical works.

There are two major considerations which present themselves as we view the problem, namely his descriptions of the external world as he sees it and as he wishes others to see it, and the emotional response which it arouses in him. As it has already been indicated by critics of this feature of Rousseau's writing, his landscapes are often in the manner of the XVIIth century pastoral scene.<sup>1</sup> While his language is sometimes that of the *Astrée*, he pays, at the same time, close attention to their component parts. He is greatly concerned that his audience, either the reader or another character in the story should likewise fully appreciate them. In these instances, he adopts a technique which follows upon the vague and undefined method of the XVIIth century, that is, the didactic exposition of an orderly thinker such as Shaftesbury. For him, and for those who subscribe to his principles, the beauty of a given locality consists, to a great degree, in the regularity and balance of contrasting elements as they appear in their natural state. Moderation, harmony, com-

<sup>1</sup> Cf., for example, F. Brunot and R. A. Rice, *op. cit.*

parative relationships, constitute the basis not only of an aesthetic theory, but of a literary method as well.

Add to these two factors the consideration of Rousseau's personal reaction and the resulting picture is one of manifold aspects. For while he often takes care to give an objective and detailed treatment of his material, his attention shifts to other concerns at a given point in his program. He is capable of presenting to others a living picture of what is before him; when it comes to himself, he indicates its effect upon him as an individual.

It should be noted that while Rousseau has a definite contribution to make in his depiction of the world of nature, his sentiment towards it is not, in itself, an original one with him.<sup>2</sup>

Rousseau is extremely responsive to all kinds of external physical impulses. Their influence is such, however, that they all act more or less simultaneously upon him, creating an impression which is multiple in its aspects and diffuse as to details. This confusion has its attraction for Rousseau, for he makes no attempt to define, analyze or differentiate between those elements which, under other circumstances, and, for the benefit of others, he observes at some length. As M. Faguet expresses it, Rousseau

. . . aime [la sensation], peu analysée, peu subdivisée, laissée dans sa plénitude, subie délicieusement, venant à lui comme par larges flots et larges nappes et l'enveloppant tout entier.<sup>3</sup>

He finds this condition very agreeable, for it is the stepping-stone to the next which is even more delightful, namely, reverie. The surroundings which he finds the most congenial are those which produce, in him, a vague and dreamy state of contemplation.

La sensation est pour Rousseau l'occasion du rêve et l'introduction au rêve.<sup>4</sup>

In this situation, which seems, at times, akin to suspended animation, it is the wandering and often disconnected thoughts succeeding one another in Rousseau's mind which absorb him.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Rice, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9; D. Mornet, introductory volume to his edition of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and his *Romantisme en France au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*.

<sup>3</sup> E. Faguet, *Rousseau artiste*, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

He reflects upon his own position in life, upon that of human society in general, coming finally to the relationship between it and its Creator. He experiences a sublime, an almost ecstatic inspiration which, in turn, evolves into his very philosophy of life. Casting aside creed and dogma, he is uplifted by that *religion naturelle*, which, he feels, must arise spontaneously in every sympathetic observer of the external world. In fancy he is carried far away from the routine of daily living and is brought to vastly richer spheres whose reality, though intangible, is, for him, unquestioned. His reverie transforms the charms of nature into the contemplation of the forces at work in the universe, of the Spirit which animates the cosmos as a whole. His attitude thus assumes a philosophical and eventually a religious cast, in which all primary sensory notations are fused and transcended.

A lesser feature of Rousseau's descriptive technique is his portrayal of individuals. While he does not treat them as extensively as he does nature, his method in the two instances is similar. His sketches are usually brief and, where they are developed at all, quite realistic. He shows less interest in this field, however, than contemporary students of character such as Denis Diderot and Samuel Richardson.

Considered within the confines of his own work, on the other hand, Rousseau's method reveals two noteworthy features: his use of color and his preference for 'naturalness' in one's appearance. The first of these appears more frequently here than in his landscape descriptions, though his colors continue to be largely the simple, primary tones. He often does no more than identify one's type as blond or brunette and indicate the trimming or general effect of one's garments. Here, as in the external world, he also favors that which is allowed to develop in its own way, free from restraint or artificial adaptation. Just as Saint-Preux finds the Alps of his native Switzerland more attractive than either English or Chinese gardens, so would he rather have a miniature of Julie which reveals many individual characteristics, even blemishes, which an artist is inclined to eliminate in an idealized portrait. To that extent, it is no longer Julie, and to that extent, it is a disappointment.

These preoccupations on the part of Rousseau have their influ-



ence upon the language in which he expresses them. While he is genuinely interested in sensationalism as a principle, and is conscious of its functioning in his own life, his attention is more often drawn to something else. Consequently, the details of a given experience receive secondary consideration. The impression which he has of a scene as a whole is more pleasing to him than the close study of its numerous aspects. It is, of course, the summation of all these items which are at work somewhat simultaneously; it is *le tout* which exerts a *je ne sais quoi de magique, de surnaturel*.<sup>5</sup> He seeks this condition of his own free will, for under these circumstances he finds the greatest peace and contentment.

He shows this attitude most clearly when he is speaking of himself as a lone observer of nature, however, for when he is in the company of others, either in actuality or in fancy, he adopts quite another tone. This is one of careful observation and exposition, for now his chief concern is that the other personage, whether real or fictitious, should see what he sees. In this case, he proves himself to be an analyst of the first order. *Montrer, faire voir, faire observer, remarquer, faire admirer, d'un côté . . . de l'autre*, the juxtaposition of contrasting elements, the combination of dissimilar ones, the notation of a series of specific items, these are all familiar elements of Rousseau's best didactic style.

To return for a moment to one of the main problems of this study, namely, his indications of sensory impulses in his descriptions of both landscapes and individuals, we find their range to be limited to rather modest dimensions. This may be accounted for through his interest in other considerations, which outweigh the purely physical aspect of a situation. I give in the Appendix as complete a list of these items as I have been able to compile; I mention visual impressions, including colors, first, as they are the most numerous; they are followed by those of sound, odor, touch, those which are composite and general and those which are specific but which do not relate to any one particular organ.

In this respect, Rousseau shows less variety of vocabulary than some of his contemporaries and successors. One has only to consider the wealth of material which is to be found in one of his

<sup>5</sup> *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. II, p. 80.

disciples, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. While Rousseau uses, over all, no more than forty different indications of color, with their shadings, tints and tones, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre employs between four and five times as many.<sup>6</sup>

With Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, far more than with Rousseau, description becomes a new art. Rousseau, though looking at nature with heightened emotion and though looking at a grander sort of nature than had decorated the pastoral romances, still lacked for his romance the first requisite of a descriptive vocabulary—an exactly observant eye, an eye for detail. His artistic purposes with scenery were, until he wrote the *Confessions* and the *Rêveries*, essentially those of the pastoral poet, abstract and emotional rather than concrete and external.<sup>7</sup>

It is perhaps to be expected that the pupil should reveal a greater richness and brilliance of style than his master. Also, one must take into consideration the fact that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre has a definite scientific interest in the natural phenomena to which he turns his attention, that he sets himself the task of studying them as much because they are specimens as for the incidental appeal of their beauty.

On the other hand, there are among Rousseau's own acquaintances, students of nature who treat it in a more specific manner than he. While they are sometimes of secondary importance in the world of letters, they should at least be mentioned here for their contributions in this particular field.

Jean François de Saint-Lambert, whom Rousseau well has occasion to know, is among those who begin to recognize the wealth of sensory experiences in landscapes. While Rousseau does not linger over such details, Saint-Lambert in his *Saisons* readily acknowledges the changes, variety and appeal of the successive stages of the cycle of the year. This work, which dates from 1769, is not a translation of Thomson's poem of the same title but is his own interpretation of the different phases through which agriculture, in particular, goes in the inexorable march of time. Of very keen perception, he makes a special effort to put his impressions into words. The result is a gaiety of outdoor scenes such as Rousseau never achieves.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. J. N. Ware, *The Vocabulary of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and its Relation to the French Romantic School*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1927.

<sup>7</sup> Rice, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

In his *Discours Préliminaire*, Saint-Lambert confesses to quick responsiveness to these influences.<sup>8</sup> This is not a state of mind peculiar to him alone, for he sees a definite attempt also on the part of others to give similar expression to their feelings. He is quite conscious of the fact that the "modern" writer has at his command "une poésie descriptive" such as the classical authors never enjoyed,<sup>9</sup> a theme which is subsequently adopted and elaborated by Chateaubriand in his *Génie du Christianisme*.<sup>10</sup> That Saint-Lambert should likewise be aware of it and try to put it into practice at this time offers an interesting contrast to the method of Rousseau.

Elle [la nature] est sublime dès qu'elle peut donner des sensations qui excitent en nous l'étonnement et la crainte . . .

Elle est grande et belle lorsqu'elle nous donne des sensations qui excitent l'admiration et l'amour . . .

Elle est aimable et riant . . . dans les lieux où elle nous promet du plaisir, et nous donne d'abord des sensations agréables . . .

Elle est triste et mélancolique lorsqu'elle excite en nous peu de sensations et nous donne peu d'idées . . . lorsqu'elle ne nous promet ni richesses ni plaisirs.<sup>11</sup>

His poem, *Les Saisons*, presents the picture of the changing seasons as the year runs its course. He is chiefly concerned with country life and the activities pertaining to each of these successive periods. Although much of it is written in the flowery XVIIIth century style, there appear very definite indications of the rich detail of beauty which is spread out before him who has eyes to see. While he speaks of *l'émail des gazons frais*,<sup>12</sup> and of *brillantes fleurs*,<sup>13</sup> which are reminiscent of that type of landscape, his verses are dotted with notations of colors, odors, sounds and tactile impressions. It is in his *Notes*, however, that he elaborates upon particularly suggestive passages, and it is there that one finds an astonishingly keen perception of the sensory experiences which are in store for the true lover of nature. He gives expression to what Rousseau doubtless also feels, but never has the inclination to analyze and present in detail.

<sup>8</sup> J. F. Saint-Lambert, *Les Saisons, Oeuvres*, ed. Didot, Paris, 1795, v. I, p. vi.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xv-xvi ff.

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 18 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Saint-Lambert, *op. cit.*, pp. xvi-xvii.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

At the end of the summer there is a noticeable fading of the hues in which the fields and forests are clothed. They become more mellow and less varied as the harvests ripen.

Il ne reste de verdure que celle des vergers, des vignes, des forêts; et ses nuances ne sont point tranchantes. Les prairies commencent à blanchir, les bleds à jaunir, et le nombre des couleurs diminue: la curiosité étoit très agréablement occupée au printemps par la multitude et la vivacité des couleurs, ainsi que par la variété des chants des oiseaux et par celle des odeurs; mais elle n'est pas également satisfaite pendant l'été.<sup>14</sup>

Autumn brings still other changes in the external world. As the crops are gathered and the earth is laid bare, nature takes on a sad and melancholy air which imparts a feeling of depression to the sympathetic observer. Rousseau, too, is aware of this in the fall; he tells us in his *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire* of the chill and gloom which the dying year casts upon his lonely heart.<sup>15</sup>

Lorsque la terre a perdu sa verdure, ses couleurs vives, son éclat, et, pour ainsi dire, sa propreté; lorsque la campagne ne présente que du limon détrempé et des couleurs sombres; l'homme perd les plaisirs attachés à l'organe de vue. Lorsque la terre est dépouillée des moissons, des feuilles, des herbes, elle présente une surface anguleuse et inégale . . . le sens de la vue perd les plaisirs qu'il doit à ses rapports avec le sens du tact . . .

. . . [L'homme] n'a plus ce plaisir qu'il devoit à la mélodie du chant des oiseaux; il n'entend plus que le bruit des eaux, celui des vents, bruit monotone, continu, et grave, qui lui donne une sensation forte, répétée et triste; il a perdu les plaisirs du sens de l'ouïe.

La campagne n'a plus de parfums, on ne respire qu'une certaine odeur d'humidité, . . . le sens de l'odorat a perdu ses plaisirs.

Le sens du tact est blessé par les impressions d'un air humide et froid . . .

La campagne ne donne donc plus de plaisir aux sens . . .<sup>16</sup>

This is the secret of its mournful aspect. Saint-Lambert is not only keenly aware of it, but also remains objective enough in his approach to be able to analyze the situation. Rousseau reaches the same conclusion with regard to the feeling which the fall of the year inspires, but is usually absorbed in thoughts other than the consideration of its source.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>15</sup> *Rêveries*, v. IX, pp. 332-333, also see above, p. 85 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Saint-Lambert, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147.

Another author of the pre-Romantic period, who is not exactly a contemporary of Rousseau, presents, nevertheless, a similar combination of the old and the new tendencies that are found in the attitude of Saint-Lambert. He is l'abbé Delille, whose *Jardins* (1782) are once again a rich mine of sensory notations, somewhat overlaid at times with the excrescences of the XVIIIth century style. He, like the others, speaks of *le tendre émail des fleurs*,<sup>17</sup> and of *Bois charmants, verts coteaux, agréables vallons*.<sup>18</sup> As his poem is essentially a treatise on the theory of expert landscaping, illustrated by the characterization of famous gardens of his time, he has numerous indications of physical stimuli of all kinds. Flashes of color appear in the streams and rivers; the subtle perfume of flowers emanates from its pages. He has a deep *sentiment de la nature* to which he gives an ordered and logical expression in both his *Jardins* and *L'Homme des champs* (1802). He praises

. . . le talent de l'homme qui sait voir les beautés de la nature avec l'oeil exercé de l'observateur, et les rendre avec la palette de l'imagination; les peindre tantôt avec les couleurs les plus riches, tantôt avec les nuances les plus fines, saisir cette correspondance secrète, . . . qui existe entre la nature physique et la nature morale, entre les sensations de l'homme et les ouvrages d'un Dieu . . .<sup>19</sup>

Such a man has imagination tempered by a realistic approach which makes possible truly vivid painting; *Les Jardins*, in themselves, show that their author possesses these qualities. He stresses this point again in his *L'Homme des champs*, another panegyric of the beauties of nature. There he deplores the fact that the crude and uninitiated *vulgaire* entirely misses

L'union, les reflets et le jeu des couleurs . . .<sup>20</sup>

Brilliant and varied hues, shadings of chiaroscuro, perfumes, sounds and occasional notations of taste animate the pages of these poems. A detailed enumeration of the features cannot be given here, but I quote from the *Notes* on the *Jardins* an especially striking picture of the effects of the evening light

<sup>17</sup> J. Delille, *Les Jardins*, Paris, Michaud, 1820, p. 101.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*, *L'Homme des champs*, Paris, Levrault, Schoell et Cie, 1805, p. 96.

which comes to his attention as a result of the publication of this work. It apparently excites much comment and is the source of a brisk correspondence.

One of the letters which he receives is from a Russian lady of distinction. The Princess Radziwil is so stirred by Delille's *Jardins* that she writes him a description of her own garden known as *Pulhavi* or *Pulhavia*. Although most of it is rather romanesque, there is at least one part which shows clearly the growing interest in the correct observation and colorful reproduction of a charming scene. I give this selection to show that the meteoric rise of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre is not entirely without precedent. While Rousseau does not consider these things in detail, there are others who, realizing their potentialities, try to give them graphic and adequate expression.

Le soir d'un beau jour d'été, la rivière vers le couchant est pourpre; et du côté de l'île, dans le temps où la lune se lève de bonne heure, à la même époque du jour, elle est argentée. Ce coup d'oeil est unique dans son genre.<sup>21</sup>

L'abbé Delille extends his study of landscapes and country life to include some of the more minute features of the natural world. It is in his *L'Homme des champs*, in particular, that he grows enthusiastic over the beauty, the intricacy and the delicacy of the infinite number of insects which one discovers if one looks about carefully. He tabulates their appearance, and their markings, with their various appendages, probosces and antennae.<sup>22</sup> In this he follows closely the way of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, for he shows a truly scientific approach in his study of these tiny creatures whose obscure existence is brightened by their gay and dashing colors. He elaborates further upon this passage in the *Notes* which supplement the poem, marvelling at the wonders and mysteries of the realm of winged things.<sup>23</sup>

Another indication of current tendencies which is to be found in both *Les Jardins* and *L'Homme des champs*, and which bears notation in this comparative survey is the injection of the melancholy into what would otherwise be a sight of unmitigated peace and harmony. In this case, it is not an interpretation of

<sup>21</sup> *Les Jardins*, p. 183.

<sup>22</sup> *L'Homme des champs*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

autumn which is to be regarded as similar to that of Saint-Lambert; it announces rather the "new" note of seductive sadness deliberately created by the presence of tombs and funeral urns in a happy, smiling scene. The subsequent Romanticist delights in this combination of the sorrowful and the gay; Delille offers an explanation for it. It is, in reality, a continuation of the theory of Horace which is echoed in other classical poets and which he has been inspired to introduce in his own work.<sup>24</sup>

To return to our more immediate concern, Rousseau's descriptive technique, there remains still another factor which must be considered in a survey of this nature. As I have already indicated in commenting upon several passages, there is a certain rhythmical and musical quality which plays an important rôle in his prose. Regarded from this point of view, it is his use, rather than his range of language which is of capital importance.

Writing is an art, as are painting, poetry and sculpture. Each of these modes of artistic expression has its medium through which the talented mind seeks to convey its inspiration to the reader, listener or observer. Furthermore, these fields and the problems of their technique are discussed by precisely those men with whom Rousseau at one time enjoys close contact. Diderot calls the pictorial features of the material with which the creative spirit has to work "hieroglyphics," which are to be interpreted according to certain precepts.<sup>25</sup> Not only does he recognize their existence, but the necessity for their proper analysis as well. Also, the uninitiated may definitely be attracted by a masterpiece in any one of these branches, without being conscious of the secret of its appeal.

These symbols, then, are the language by which the gifted soul clothes its utterances. In the case of Rousseau, one source of his charm lies in the graceful and harmonious series of sounds and rhythms which he succeeds apparently instinctively in introducing into his mellifluous prose. It is not so much the detailed elements of his sentence-structure which constitute its beauty, as the general impression which is produced through the music of his style. The presence of such a distinguishing feature can

<sup>24</sup> *Les Jardins*, p. 210, and *L'Homme des champs*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 38 ff.

readily be explained, for such points had come to be seriously studied at the time of his writing. They spring not only from the theoretical consideration of letters as a medium of expression, but also from the active interest in music which increases as the XVIIIth century progresses. Both amateurs and professionals are alive to the close interrelation of the two,

... amateurs comme Buffon, exécutants comme le fûteur Beaumarchais, inspireurs comme le même Beaumarchais et surtout Marmontel, qui collaborent avec Salieri et Piccini, voire compositeur comme Rousseau, sans parler des théoriciens comme Diderot et D'Alembert.<sup>26</sup>

Rousseau's activities in this connection do not need to be elaborated here. Suffice it to call attention to his practical and speculative works relating to the subject. During one period of his restless youth, he gives music lessons in order to earn a living.<sup>27</sup> Shortly after his arrival in Paris, he attempts, although unsuccessfully, to launch a new scheme of musical notation.<sup>28</sup> His *Lettre sur la musique française* (1753) and his *Dictionnaire de musique* (1767) are two more of his contributions to the general movement, with his *Muses galantes* (1745) and the *Devin de village* (1752), among his original compositions, as evidence of his creative talent as well. The publication of J. Tiersot, *Les leçons de musique de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*,<sup>29</sup> throws additional light upon Rousseau's experimentation and study. It concerns his remarks upon two sets of papers dealing with specific problems of harmony and counterpoint. They constitute a series of "lessons," with annotated sheets of music for reference purposes. Incomplete as they are, they demonstrate still another aspect of his interest in this field.

Rousseau develops his ideas still further in other works of theory, such as his *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, and the early chapters of the *Émile*. Here he is concerned with the function of music in the language of either mankind in its first stages, or of an individual, the child *Émile*, who, when he begins to express himself vocally, should receive some training in this subject.

<sup>26</sup> F. Brunot, *Histoire de la langue française des origines à 1900*, t. 6<sup>e</sup>, 2 fasc., p. 2068.

<sup>27</sup> *Confessions*, v. VIII, p. 133 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Projet concernant de nouveaux signes pour la musique* (1742), v. VI, p. 253 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Paris, no date.



In the former instance, Rousseau thinks that music figures definitely in the most primitive form of human utterance. Since, according to him, it takes its origin, not from one's needs, but from one's passions, this factor has an influence upon its nature. It causes it to be violent or gentle, piercing or soft. There results a close relationship between cadence and sound on the one hand and syllables on the other. Thus there is a connection between *les vers*, *les chants*, and *la parole*, which have a common source.<sup>80</sup> Consequently, the first speech was chanted or sung, because *les retours périodiques et mesurés du rythme, les inflexions mélodieuses des accens*, constitute its basic elements.<sup>81</sup> This is logical, for human desires developed before human reason, and hence received an earlier expression. Rousseau reaches a similar conclusion in speaking of languages which have long since evolved from their original simplicity, but whose fundamental precepts remain the same. Not only do they continue to convey ideas, but also *sentiments et images*, and for this,

. . . il lui faut [à la langue] un rythme et des sons, c'est-à-dire une mélodie.<sup>82</sup>

In his discussion of melody and harmony, which follows, he takes issue with some of Rameau's dissenting opinions on the subject.<sup>83</sup>

Turning from the history of man in general, Rousseau also considers a specific example under analogous, if somewhat circumscribed conditions, that is, his child-pupil Émile. The first years of his life are to be free from any and all formal training, and instruction is to begin in the field of music even before he is introduced to the usual routine of elementary education.<sup>84</sup> This offers an opportunity for the exercise of the voice, the ear and the mental faculties involved in the composing and notation of simple musical compositions.

Another topic of interest for Rousseau, and one bearing on the question of music in general is the doctrine of "hieroglyphics" of Diderot. Friends and co-workers at one time, they both study the relationships between painting, poetry and music. In my discussion of this problem, I pointed out the radical disagreement

<sup>80</sup> *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, v. I, ch. XII, p. 395.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, chs. XIII and XIV.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>84</sup> *Émile*, v. II, pp. 120-121.

between them concerning the similarity of the three modes of artistic expression.

We come then to consider the rôle of music in Rousseau's own prose works. M. Brunot treats this point at some length.<sup>35</sup> He finds that descriptive language during the age of Rousseau shows definite trends towards a "picturesque construction,"<sup>36</sup> and places both Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre in the first rank of the masters of this art.

Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, ces maîtres du style pittoresque, ont obtenu sans doute beaucoup plus par la musique de la phrase que par la construction proprement dite.<sup>37</sup>

In his analysis, M. Brunot characterizes selected passages as revealing a "rythme purement descriptif," as "des phrases . . . de pure orchestration visuelle"; he has discovered the secret of a vivid landscape, ". . . le mouvement du paysage [est] rendu sensible. . . ."<sup>38</sup>

Rousseau himself is aware that this quality of harmony and rhythm is desirable and should be carefully cultivated. He asks himself upon one occasion,

Comment être poète en prose? <sup>39</sup>

He even defends questionable usage when the beauty of the sentence as an artistic unit is at stake. He affirms that,

L'harmonie me paroît une chose si importante en fait de style que je la mets immédiatement après la clarté, même avant la correction.<sup>40</sup>

Nor is he alone in this sentiment; Diderot, the source of so many, of his ideas, likewise emphasizes it.<sup>41</sup>

As M. Brunot points out, theories concerning *l'harmonie expressive* in literature have, prior to the period with which we are dealing, been largely confined to poetry. Prose writers, however, have also made substantial contributions to it, both in actual practice and in the critical study of the subject.<sup>42</sup> There are, furthermore, several aspects of the problem which have appeared in successive generations of writers. There is *l'har-*

<sup>35</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 2049 ff.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2051.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2111, note 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2067 and p. 2077 ff.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2067.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2098-2099.

papier.' Cette recherche douloureuse 'du nombre et de l'harmonie,' qu'il a poursuivie dans tous ses autres ouvrages, c'est dans la *Nouvelle Héloïse* qu'il l'a surtout tentée. Plus il y mettait de son cœur, plus l'émotion confuse qui l'agitait avait besoin de s'organiser, et mieux aussi la cadence s'insinuait entre les mots, pour les répartir en groupes harmonieux, savamment disposés et coupés.<sup>54</sup>

The logical sequel to the study of such qualities of style as harmony and melody is the attempt to establish certain patterns of rhythm and even verse-forms, metrical units which may be identified according to the recognized, classical standards. Numerous studies have been made of this feature of Rousseau's prose; the assertion is even made that parts of the original version of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* were written in poetry and only subsequently transcribed.<sup>55</sup> While this proposal has not been universally adopted,<sup>56</sup> there are several expressions of opinion on the subject.<sup>57</sup>

Obviously there is a danger of pushing such investigations too far. While the poetic note is undeniably strong in his style, it nevertheless remains elusive, intangible and variable. Although one may occasionally determine the metrical form of particularly lyrical passages, one cannot say that Rousseau either deliberately planned it that way or had a specific pattern in mind. M. Brunot summarizes both Rousseau's talent and his manner of revealing it. There are irregularities in his prose, when it is considered from this somewhat technical point of view, while there is often no hint of any such preoccupation on his part at all. Sometimes, also, it seems still to be in a stage of experimentation. M. Brunot comments upon a selection from the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, v. II, p. 246, "Réponds-moi maintenant, amante abusée . . .," etc.

Le musicien tâtonne sans doute, en quête de ses moyens d'expressions. Il ne les détermine pas toujours avec la même sûreté, la même précision. Mais souvent aussi il parvient à réaliser une harmonie très pure.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 260-261.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264 ff.

<sup>56</sup> Brunot, *op. cit.*, p. 2112, note 4.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Lanson, Faguet and Coculesco, *op. cit.*; also Brunot, *op. cit.*, p. 2111, where he mentions Brunetière, Zyromski, Le Breton, A. François as among the first to discover "des vers et des strophes" in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*.

<sup>58</sup> Brunot, *op. cit.*, p. 2112.

There appear, it is true, forms such as iambic tetrameter, the ode and even modern versification.<sup>59</sup> S. Coculesco in his *Essai sur les rythmes toniques du français*, Paris, 1925, discusses the last of these, in particular. It is in moments of deep sentiment, "toutes les fois que du lyrisme jaillit, une émotion vraiment intense et sincère, nous n'avons que regarder de près pour constater l'existence, . . . de rythmes toniques."<sup>60</sup> M. Coculesco also seeks to identify arithmetical rhythms, which, he concludes, are apt to appear in passages which are not of an emotional inspiration or lyrical in tone.<sup>61</sup> Finally, one discovers, at times, a combination of the two, in instances where ". . . Rousseau n'est pas inspiré, mais rhéteur où il veut conserver à tout prix la nuance lyrique de son roman, malgré l'absence momentanée d'émotion réelle, et alors sa prose abonde en vers blancs arithmétiques, . . ."<sup>62</sup> The juxtaposition of two elements springing from such dissimilar sources makes it possible to ". . . atteindre un maximum chantant."<sup>63</sup>

In the desire to establish definite metrical patterns in a field as diversified as that covered by Rousseau, one must, I feel, avoid the temptations of an all-inclusive system. The recognition of certain features in a style as provocative and charming as Rousseau's leads, quite naturally, to the wish to subject it as a whole to an analytical appraisal. Certainly there is poetry and rhythm in at least the more lyrical paragraphs in Rousseau; whether he can be extensively reduced to conformity with such standards of form and expression is, I think, another question which cannot be answered so readily in the affirmative.

In conclusion, then, it would appear that it is the application of these general principles, whether consciously or instinctively, that constitutes one of Rousseau's chief claims to distinction. Marmontel in his *Poétique* aptly sums up his talent.

. . . l'analyse des éléments physiques d'une langue 'est le travail du grammairien; le devoir du poète . . . est de se livrer aux mouvements de son âme. S'il possède sa langue, s'il a exercé son oreille au sentiment de l'harmonie, son style peindra sans qu'il s'en aperçoive, et le nombre y viendra de lui-même s'accorder avec la pensée.'<sup>64</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Coculesco, *Essai*, p. 45.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 45.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52

<sup>64</sup> Brunot, *op. cit.*, p. 2101.

To what extent does this characteristic of Rousseau's prose style find an echo in his successors? While there seems to be no one who follows immediately and slavishly in his steps,<sup>55</sup> there are individual features which have an influence upon some of the outstanding personalities in the ensuing generations. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, for example, derives from Rousseau his love of nature; he couples it, however, with a keener interest in its specific details and the desire to create a picturesque, descriptive vocabulary. Among those for whom *l'état d'âme* inspired by such contemplation is of prime importance, both Chateaubriand and Senancourt accord it a treatment and analysis other than that of their predecessor. Rousseau enjoys it in all its vagueness and indistinctness, forgetting *le paysage extérieur*, for the day-dreaming which he finds so delightful. He creates a world of fancy, the appeal of which is far greater than any external force in his environment. In this, he foreshadows especially *le paysage intérieur* of Lamartine. His language, as well as his thought, finds an echo in this XIXth century lyricist.

Ainsi la prose musicale de Rousseau ouvre-t-elle la voie à la poésie romantique, celle de Lamartine en particulier.<sup>56</sup>

For a writer so sensitive, so gifted, so musical and so self-revealing, one may wonder why there is little material evidence of his influence to be found earlier than the turn of the century. Perhaps it is because he sees, feels and expresses himself in a way to which only those of a similar temperament can fully respond. Also, among those whose sentiments and interests have been guided through other channels, it is necessary for them to learn to appreciate in the external world those factors which arouse an instinctive reaction in Rousseau. A period of subtle instruction is required to bring out special elements in certain individuals, with the fullest development coming only after a considerable period of initiation.

Thus we see Rousseau in the light which has become so familiar to us: a lover of nature, attracted by its beauty, he is successful to a certain degree in transcribing his observations for his reader, but, in the last analysis, he is more concerned with his own position in the picture. Many aspects of his writing

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2113.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2112.

have had an influence upon authors of later times, culminating, perhaps, in one of the chief exponents of a school of expression with which he is, in his own thought and sentiment, already somewhat identified. Through it all, however, his style remains his very own: a gem whose many facets gleam and glisten, striking fire in the imaginations of a host of sympathetic and responsive personalities.



## APPENDIX

The items included in this appendix are the notations of sensations, specific and general, which are to be found in those of Rousseau's works which have formed the basis of this study. The list is as complete as I have been able to make it, comprising experiences of a composite nature as well as those relating directly to each of the five senses. I give the visual perceptions first, as they are the most numerous. There follow, in succession, the auditory, olfactory, tactile and general, with an added category of particular observations which are not limited to any one organ. In each group, I do not necessarily give every example of every term which appears in the text; several, especially in the primary colors and in sounds, are virtual duplications of one another. Thus, while my examples are not exhaustive, as to number, they offer, I trust, a representative selection, as I have chosen what I consider to be the best illustrations. I have taken the liberty of modernizing the spelling in these quotations, in the hope that this will prove more satisfactory if there should ever be occasion to consult them in any other connection. The system of identification which I use here is similar to that of the rest of the thesis: the Roman numerals after a title indicate the number of the volume of the Hachette edition of Rousseau in which the composition appears. The one exception is *La Nouvelle Héloïse*; for this, I have used the Mornet edition exclusively. The titles are rendered thus: *Confessions*, *Conf.*; *Rêveries*, *Rêv.*; *Émile*, *Ém.*; *Émile et Sophie*, *É. & S.*; *Nouvelle Héloïse*, *N. H.*

### 1. VISUAL PERCEPTIONS

#### A. Colors <sup>1</sup>

- argenté . . . le frémissement argenté dont l'eau brillait . . . *N. H.*  
III 288
- azur . . . les deux premières parties de la *Julie*, que je fis . . .  
employant pour cela . . . de la poudre d'azur et d'argent  
pour sécher l'écriture, . . . *Conf.* VIII 313

<sup>1</sup> While some of these terms may be identified as elements present in the solar spectrum, others are of a more equivocal nature, and their appearance in this list has been determined by the context.



- azuré** . . . le spectacle que l'appareil des mines substitue, . . . à celui de la verdure et des fleurs, du ciel azuré . . . *Rév.* IX 377
- basané** . . . son teint basané, son humeur silencieuse . . . favoris-  
saient beaucoup cette opinion. *Conf.* IX 42
- blanc** . . . ses rayons, dont le rouge forme sur ces cimes blanches  
une belle couleur de rose . . . *N. H.* III 285
- blanchâtre** . . . je vis tomber à terre je ne sais quoi de gluant et  
de blanchâtre qui me fit soulever le coeur. *Conf.* VIII  
46
- blancheur** . . . la blancheur de ses dents, la douceur de son haleine. . .  
*Conf.* VIII 227
- blanchir** . . . vous voyez déjà blanchir la pointe de la dent-de-jamant,  
. . . *N. H.* II 58
- blanchi** . . . dans une pièce nouvellement blanchie, on suspendra  
près du mur quelque jouet, . . . *Em.* II 107
- bleuâtre** Le ciel est représenté par certaines quenilles bleuâtres,  
suspendus à des bâtons . . . *N. H.* II 390
- bleu** Je vois . . . de beaux yeux bleus pleins de douceur . . .  
*Conf.* VIII 33
- blonde** Je fis l'une brune et l'autre blonde, . . . *Conf.* VIII  
308
- blondin** . . . un petit abbé blondin qui jouait du violon, . . . *Conf.*  
VIII 86
- bourbeux** . . . les embouchures du Rhône dont l'impétueux cours . . .  
semble craindre de souiller de ses eaux bourbeuses le  
cristal azuré du lac. *N. H.* III 280
- brune** On ne me fera jamais croire que les mêmes attitudes,  
. . . conviennent à une petite brune vive . . . et à une  
grande belle blonde aux yeux languissants. *Em.* II 346
- brunette** Elle était . . . une brunette de vingt ans au plus.  
*Conf.* VIII 225
- brunir** . . . le coton rare et doux qui croît au bas de ses joues  
brunit et prend de la consistance. *Em.* II 181
- carmin** On dirait que c'est du rouge . . . plaqué comme le  
carmin des femmes de ce pays. *N. H.* II 401
- cendrée** Elle avait . . . des cheveux cendrés d'une beauté peu  
commune, . . . *Conf.* VIII 34
- châtain** Les sourcils sont plus châains, et les cheveux plus  
cendrés. *N. H.* II 402
- doré** . . . je le rendrais tellement l'esclave de son habit doré, . .  
qu'il verrait avec moins d'effroi le plus noir cachot . . .  
*Em.* II 96
- dorer** . . . les premiers rayons qui la [la verdure] dorent, la  
montre couverte d'un brillant réseau de rosée, . . . *Em.*  
II 139
- dorure** . . . je quittai la dorure et les bas blancs . . . *Conf.* VIII  
258

- écarlate** Je le vois . . . en habit d'écarlate à boutons d'or, . . .  
*Conf.* VIII 55
- enflammé** . . . mon père entra dans la chambre . . . les yeux étin-  
cellants, le visage enflammé . . . *N.H.* II 222
- grison** C'était un lazariste . . . à moitié borgne, maigre,  
grison, . . . *Conf.* VIII 82
- grisonnant** . . . la tête me tourne, malgré mes cheveux déjà grison-  
nants, . . . *Conf.* VIII 306
- hâve** Les visages hâves des malheureux . . . de noirs for-  
gerons, . . . *Rév.* IX 377
- jaune** . . . l'herbe est jaune et flétrie, . . . *N.H.* II 98
- livide** . . . je la vis assise dans un fauteuil, défaite et pâle, ou  
plutôt livide, . . . *N.H.* IV 290
- noir** Son teint n'est plus reconnaissable; il est noir comme  
un more, . . . *N.H.* III 167
- noirceur** . . . sa noirceur ne venait que d'un fer très divisé, détaché  
du vitriol, . . . *Ém.* II 153
- or** . . . c'est l'or de tes cheveux qui doit parer ton visage, . . .  
*N.H.* II 402
- pain d'épice** . . . ce visage de pain d'épice orné d'une longue balafre, . . .  
*Conf.* VIII 46
- pâle** . . . mes camarades dont le teint pâle et la maigreur attes-  
taient la vérité de mes plaintes, . . . *E. & S.* III 30
- pâleur** . . . une pâleur étrangère couvre vos jous . . . *N.H.* II 13
- pâlir** . . . Claire . . . voit pâlir son amie, elle hésite, . . . *N.H.*  
IV 121
- plombé** . . . je la vis assise dans un fauteuil, . . . les yeux plombés  
et presque éteints . . . *N.H.* IV 290
- pourpre** . . . un trône, un sceptre, une robe de pourpre, une cou-  
ronne, . . . *Ém.* II 295
- rose** Le coloris des joues . . . ne se fond pas . . . en couleur  
de rose vers le bas du visage . . . *N.H.* II 401
- rouge** Elles ont vu que le peuple avait en horreur le rouge, . . .  
*N.H.* II 365
- Que je crois le sable qui est au fond de la mer blanc  
ou rouge, cela ne m'importe pas . . . *Rév.* IX 349
- rougeur** Cette rougeur, . . . me fit un effet que je ne saurais  
dire . . . *N.H.* IV 123
- rougir** . . . Mlle de Breil rougit jusqu'au blanc des yeux. *Conf.*  
VIII 67
- roux** Il était blond, et sa barbe tirait sur le roux . . . *Conf.*  
VIII 83
- sanglant** . . . il voit dans l'ombre de la nuit son corps pâle et  
sanglant . . . *N.H.* II 202
- sombre** Vos yeux deviennent sombres . . . *N.H.* II 13
- verdoyant** Le gazon verdoyant, . . . était mêlé de serpolet, de  
baume, de thim, . . . *N.H.* III 226
- verdure** . . . il y a aussi plus de verdure naturelle, plus de prairies,  
. . . *Rév.* IX 359

- vert C'était depuis Bossey la première fois que j'avais du vert devant mes fenêtres. *Conf.* VIII 73  
 Sur le penchant de quelque agréable colline . . . j'aurais . . . une maison blanche avec des contrevents verts . . .  
*Em.* II 324
- violet . . . le malheureux suffoquait de colère, . . . je le vis devenir violet. *Em.* II 34

## B. Colors \*

- brillant . . . brillantes fleurs, émail des prés . . . *Rév.* IX 378
- briller On y voyait briller mille fleurs des champs, . . . *N. H.* III 226
- coloré Il avait la peau blanche, les joues colorées, . . . *Conf.* VIII 233
- coloris . . . quelle fraîcheur de coloris je leur donne! *Conf.* VIII 115
- couleur . . . la lumière et les couleurs . . . *Em.* II 139
- (vives) . . . la subtilité de l'air qui rend les couleurs plus vives . . .  
*N. H.* II 79
- éblouissant Je vois un teint éblouissant, . . . *Conf.* VIII 33  
 . . . elle a pris un peu plus d'embonpoint, qui ne fait qu'ajouter à son éblouissante blancheur. *N. H.* III 159
- éclat . . . l'orient paraît tout en flammes; à leur éclat on attend l'astre longtemps avant qu'il se montre . . . *Em.* II 138  
 (des fleurs) . . . l'éclat des fleurs . . . *Rév.* IX 375  
 (des joues) . . . j'appergus, . . . le coloris de tes joues prendre un nouvel éclat. *N. H.* II 56
- émail . . . émail des prés . . . *Rév.* IX 375
- flammes . . . l'orient paraît tout en flammes . . . *Em.* II, 138
- fleuri . . . ces bocages fleuris . . . *N. H.* III 226
- fraîcheur . . . le tumulte du monde [ternissait] . . . la fraîcheur des bosquets . . . *Rév.* IX 389
- frais . . . je trouve . . . la verdure plus fraîche et plus vive . . .  
*N. H.* II 138
- incendie . . . l'incendie augmente . . . [du lever du soleil] *Em.* II 138
- verdure J'aperçus le ciel, quelques étoiles, et un peu de verdure.  
*Rév.* IX 333  
 (animée) . . . une verdure animée et vive . . . *N. H.* III 224  
 (charme) . . . le charme de la verdure . . . *Em.* II 139  
 (vigueur) . . . la verdure a pris . . . une vigueur nouvelle . . . *Em.* II 139

\* While these terms are not, strictly speaking, colors, their context has given them a pictorial and descriptive value.

## C. Light and shade

- brillant . . . un point brillant part comme un éclair . . . *Em.* II 139
- clair obscur . . . le clair obscur du soleil et des ombres, . . . *N.H.* II 77
- éclairer . . . leurs sommets sont encore éclairés de ses rayons, . . . *N.H.* III 285
- étincillant . . . Les yeux étincillants, . . . *Rév.* IX 389
- fêtrir . . . elles fêtrissent l'émail des prés, . . . *Rév.* IX 375
- lumière . . . les rayons du soleil . . . enrichissaient de mille accidents de lumière le plus beau tableau . . . *Em.* II 236
- obscur . . . des touffes obscures, impénétrables aux rayons du soleil . . . *N.H.* III 226
- obscurité . . . je me perdais dans l'obscurité d'un bois touffu. *N.H.* II 76
- ombrager . . . On y trouve . . . de gras pâturages ombragés de bosquets, . . . *Rév.* IX 359
- ombrages . . . ces ombrages verts et touffus, n'étaient formés que de ces plantes rampantes . . . *N.H.* III 227
- ombres . . . les rayons du soleil . . . projetant sur les champs par longues ombres les arbres, les coteaux, les maisons, . . . *Em.* II 236
- ternir . . . ses yeux ternis par la douleur lancent des feux plus piquants. *N.H.* IV 158

## D. Forms

- anfractuosité . . . je m'enfonçai dans les anfractuosités de la montagne . . . *Rév.* IX 380
- angles . . . les redans des montagnes, dont les angles correspondants et parallèles forment dans l'espace qui les sépare un lit digne du fleuve qui le remplit. *N.H.* III 280
- arcade . . . La montagne est tellement escarpée, que l'eau se détache net et tombe en arcade . . . *Conf.* VIII 123
- biais . . . Ses jambes, droites, menus et même assez longues, l'auraient agrandi si elles eussent été verticales; mais elles posaient de biais, comme celles d'un compas très ouvert. *Conf.* VIII 99
- contour . . . Je vois . . . le contour d'une gorge enchanteresse. *Conf.* VIII 33
- étendue . . . une vaste étendue d'eau claire et cristalline, . . . *Rév.* IX 364
- forme . . . les plus élégantes formes . . . *Rév.* IX 375
- feston . . . des festons de neige étaient le seul ornement de ces arbres . . . *N.H.* III 286
- gracieux . . . toutes ces structures charmantes et gracieuses . . . *Rév.* IX 375-376

- irrégulier Je suivais des allées tortueuses et irrégulières . . .  
N.H. III 226
- pendant . . . ces touffes pendantes, . . . N.H. III 225
- pendre . . . des arbres . . . dont on avait fait recourber les branches,  
pendre en terre, et prendre racine, . . . N.H. III 226
- pic . . . des roches coupées à pic . . . *Rév.* IX 380
- pointe . . . les pointes des monts différemment éclairées, . . . N.H.  
II 77
- recourber . . . des arbres . . . dont on avait fait recourber les  
branches, . . . N.H. III 226
- rond Ce beau bassin, d'une forme presque ronde, enferme  
dans son milieu deux petites îles, . . . *Rév.* IX 359
- symétrie . . . je voyais çà et là sans ordre et sans symétrie des  
broussailles de roses, . . . N.H. III 226
- tortueux Nous y parvinmes . . . par des sentiers tortueux et  
frais, . . . N.H. III 284

## E. Optics

- flux et reflux . . . le flux et reflux de cette eau, . . . frappant sans  
relâche mes yeux . . . *Rév.* IX 362
- obliquement . . . la perspective des monts étant verticale frappe les  
yeux tout à la fois et bien plus puissamment que celle  
des plaines qui ne se voit qu'obliquement, en fuyant, . . .  
N.H. II 77
- optique . . . les illusions de l'optique . . . N.H. II 77  
Cet herbier . . . produit l'effet d'un optique qui les  
peindrait [les plantes] d'erechef à mes yeux. *Rév.*  
IX 382
- perspective . . . la perspective des monts étant verticale frappe les  
yeux tout à la fois . . . N.H. II 77
- verticale *See perspective*

## F. General

- cristal . . . quelques ruisseaux . . . roulaient sur la verdure en  
filets de cristal. N.H. III 286
- cristallin . . . une vaste étendue d'eau claire et cristalline, . . . *Rév.*  
IX 364
- limpide . . . les limpides eaux . . . *Rév.* IX 361
- lune (clair de lune) . . . nous étions seuls, dans un bosquet au clair de  
lune . . . *Conf.* VIII 319  
(doux rayons) . . . les doux rayons de la lune. . . . N.H. III 288
- serein . . . je trouve . . . le ciel plus serein . . . N.H. II 138
- surface . . . l'instabilité des choses de ce monde, dont la surface  
des eaux m'offrait l'image . . . *Rév.* IX 362
- trait . . . la subtilité de l'air qui rend . . . les traits plus  
marqués, . . . N.H. II 80

## 2. AUDITORY PERCEPTIONS

## A. Birds

- chant (des bécassines) . . . le chant assez gai des bécassines . . . *N.H.* III 287  
 (des oiseaux) . . . tous les oiseaux chantaient la naissance d'un beau jour d'été . . . *Conf.* VIII 95  
 (du rossignol) . . . je faisais ces méditations . . . au chant du rossignol . . . *Conf.* VIII 305  
 chœur Les oiseaux en chœur se réunissent et saluent de concert le père de la vie . . . *Em.* II 139  
 concert . . . au milieu des bois et des eaux, au concert des oiseaux de toute espèce . . . *Conf.* VIII 374  
 cri (des corbeaux) . . . les cris des corbeaux et des oiseaux de proie . . . *Conf.* VIII 123  
 (du duc, etc.) . . . le duc, la chevêche et l'orfraie, faisaient entendre leurs cris . . . *Rév.* IX 380  
 (de l'épervier, etc.) . . . le vorace épervier, le corbeau funèbre et l'aigle terrible des alpes faisaient . . . retentir de leurs cris ces cavernes . . . *N.H.* III 286  
 gazouillement . . . leur gazouillement, faible encore, est plus lent et plus doux que dans le reste de la journée . . . *Em.* II 139  
 ramage (des oiseaux) . . . j'entend un ramage bruyant et confus . . . *N.H.* III 229  
 (des rossignols) . . . les rossignols, presque à la fin de leur ramage, semblaient se plaisir à le renforcer . . . *Conf.* VIII 95

## B. Music

- bruyant . . . les airs bruyants et brillants ne me réveillèrent point . . . *Conf.* VIII 222  
 (son) . . . des éclats de voix qui ne rendent pas les sons plus mélodieux mais plus bruyants, . . . *N.H.* II 163  
 cadences . . . je trouvai surtout un grand soulagement à ne sentir . . . ces lourdes cadences, . . . *N.H.* II 165  
 chant . . . la sensation délicieuse que me firent la douce harmonie et les chants angéliques de celui [air d'opéra] qui me réveilla? *Conf.* VIII 222  
 charivari . . . un charivari sans fin d'instruments sans mélodie . . . *N.H.* II 394  
 harmonie *Sec chant*  
 refrain . . . le rustique refrain de la chanson des bisquières . . . *Conf.* VIII 295  
 ronron . . . un ronron traînant . . . de basses . . . *N.H.* II 394  
 son . . . qu'ai-je entendu? Quels sons touchants? *N.H.* II 159

## C. Water

- bruit (de l'eau) . . . le flux et reflux de cette eau, son bruit continu, mais renflé par intervalles, . . . *Rév.* IX 362  
 (des rames) . . . le bruit égal et mesuré des rames . . . *N.H.* III 287  
 (du torrent) . . . un torrent . . . charriait avec bruit du limon, du sable et des pierres . . . *N.H.* III 285  
 (des vagues) . . . le bruit des vagues et l'agitation de l'eau, fixant mes sens . . . *Rév.* IX 362  
 bruyant . . . de hautes et bruyantes cascades . . . *N.H.* II 76  
 cours (des eaux) . . . au milieu du cours des eaux et du chant des oiseaux . . . *Rév.* IX 374  
 gazouillement (d'eau) . . . un gazouillement d'eau courante . . . *N.H.* III 224  
 (des ruisseaux) . . . je faisais ces méditations . . . au gazouillement des ruisseaux . . . *Conf.* VIII 305  
 mugissement . . . cette eau bleue dont j'entendais le mugissement à travers les cris des corbeaux . . . *Conf.* VIII 123  
 murmure . . . le murmure des eaux inspire une langueur plus amoureuse . . . *N.H.* II 138  
 roulement . . . le roulement des torrents qui tombent de la montagne . . . *Rév.* IX 359

## D. General

- bourdonnement . . . un bourdonnement grave et sourd . . . *Conf.* VIII 162  
 bruit . . . le même bruit se répète et se multiplie . . . *Rév.* IX 380  
 (d'oreilles) . . . un grand bruit d'oreilles se joignit à cela . . . *Conf.* VIII 162  
 bruyant . . . il était bruyant et tapageur en paroles, . . . *Conf.* VIII, 233.  
 cliquetis . . . un certain cliquetis . . . se répète et se multiplie . . . *Rév.* IX 380  
 cri (affreux) . . . les cris affreux, . . . dont retentit le théâtre . . . *N.H.* II 393  
 (aigu) . . . Un moment après vinrent les cris aigus . . . *Em.* II 34  
 glapissement . . . on voit les actrices . . . arracher avec violence les glapissements de leurs poumons . . . *N.H.* II 393  
 mugissement . . . les longs mugissements dont retentit le théâtre . . . *N.H.* II 393  
 sifflement . . . un sifflement très aigu . . . *Conf.* VIII 162  
 tapageur . . . *See bruyant*  
 voix . . . Il avait deux voix toutes différentes, . . . L'une était grave et sonore, . . . L'autre claire, aiguë, perçante, . . . pour peu qu'il s'animât . . . cet accent devenait comme le sifflement d'un clef, et il avait toute la peine du monde à reprendre sa basse *Conf.* VIII 99

- (argentée) . . . c'était la même voix, cette voix argentée de la jeunesse, . . . *Conf.* VIII 139
- (de buffle) Il avait . . . un visage de pain d'épice, une voix de buffle, . . . *Conf.* VIII 83
- (flûtée) . . . elle était très mignonne, . . . une voix nette, juste et flûtée, . . . *Conf.* VIII 135
- (de loin) . . . sa voix s'entendait de loin . . . *Conf.* VIII 233
- (doux son) . . . le doux son de ta voix y porte une agitation nouvelle . . . *N.H.* II 56
- (son flatteur) J'y crois entendre le son flatteur de ta voix. *N.H.* II 183
- (touchante) . . . cette voix touchante qu'on n'entend point sans émotion . . . *N.H.* II 8

## E. Silence \*

- silence (de la nature) . . . silence que ne trouble aucun autre bruit que le cri des aigles, le ramage entrecoupé de quelques oiseaux, et le roulement des torrents qui tombent de la montagne . . . *Rév.* IX 359
- (de nous) . . . nous gardions un profond silence. *N.H.* III 287

## 3. OLFACTORY PERCEPTIONS

- ambre . . . je donnais au diable le rouge, les falbalas, et l'ambre . . . *Conf.* VIII 295
- cerfeuil . . . la vapeur d'une bonne omelette au cerfeuil . . . *Conf.* VIII 295
- embaumé . . . je courais . . . respirer un air embaumé sur le péristyle! *Conf.* VIII 374
- empuanti . . . enfermé dans un triste bureau empuanti de l'haleine et de la sueur de tous ces manans, . . . *Conf.* VIII 133
- fleur d'orange . . . je ne sens que la rose et la fleur d'orange . . . *Conf.* VIII 134
- odorant . . . le gazon était mêlé de serpolet, de baume, de thim, de marjolaine, et d'autres herbes odorantes . . . *N.H.* III 226
- parfum (des fleurs) . . . le parfum des fleurs . . . *Em.* II 139
- (de la fleur d'orange) . . . au milieu des bois et des esux, . . . au parfum de la fleur d'orange, . . . je composai . . . le cinquième livre de l'*Émile* . . . *Conf.* VIII 374
- (cabinet de toilette) . . . le doux parfum d'un cabinet de toilette . . . *Em.* II 128
- (doux, léger) . . . quel parfum . . . plus doux que la rose, et plus léger que l'iris . . . *N.H.* II 183

\* Although silence is, of course, the absence of any auditory perception, this seemed to be the most satisfactory place in which to enter these examples which are the negation of the type of experiences which are being considered in this particular classification.



- (parfumer l'air) Elle parfume l'air . . . *N.H.* III 238  
 (vigne en fleurs) . . . la vigne en fleurs exhale au loin de plus  
 doux parfums . . . *N.H.* II 138  
 puant (chandelles) . . . deux ou trois chandelles puantes et mal  
 mouchées . . . *N.H.* II 391  
 (rues) . . . de petites rues sales et puantes . . . *Conf.* VIII 118  
 rose *See fleur d'orange*  
 suave (air) . . . le doux air de la patrie, plus suave que les parfums de  
 l'orient . . . *N.H.* III 156  
 (odeurs) . . . les odeurs suaves . . . *Rév.* IX 375

## 4. TACTILE PERCEPTIONS

- chaleur . . . l'extrême chaleur rendant le dehors et le dedans de la  
 maison presque également insupportables, . . . *N.H.*  
 III 224  
 chaud Il avait fait très chaud ce jour-là, . . . *Conf.* VIII 119  
 fraîcheur . . . je fus frappé d'une agréable sensation de fraîcheur . . .  
*N.H.* III 224  
 frais (air) Je ne manquais . . . de courir . . . humer l'air salubre  
 et frais du matin . . . *Conf.* IX 71  
 (bocages) . . . je faisais ces méditations . . . sous les bocages  
 frais . . . *Conf.* VIII 305  
 (ombrages) . . . les ombrages frais . . . *Rév.* IX 361  
 frissonnement . . . une surface . . . qui cause un frissonnement dés-  
 agréable en y passant la main, . . . *N.H.* II 149  
 froid (air) . . . l'air était frais, sans être froid . . . *Conf.* VIII 119  
 (des glaces) . . . je sentais venir le froid des premières glaces, . . .  
*Rév.* IX 332 333  
 gluant . . . je vis . . . tomber à terre je ne sais quoi de gluant et  
 de blanchâtre . . . *Conf.* VIII 46  
 humecter . . . la rosée humectait l'herbe flétrie . . . *Conf.* VIII 119  
 humide (terre) . . . la terre humide et fraîche était couverte d'herbes  
 et de fleurs . . . *N.H.* III 285  
 (vapeur) . . . l'humide vapeur de la rosée . . . *Ém.* II 139  
 mol et doux . . . le marcher mol et doux sur la pelouse . . . *Ém.* II 139  
 poser . . . je sentis . . . la bouche de Julie . . . se poser, se  
 presser sur la mie, . . . *N.H.* II 56  
 presser *See poser*  
 rêche . . . [rêche] signifie . . . une surface rude au toucher . . .  
*N.H.* II 149  
 résistance . . . il fait . . . sentir à la main la résistance élastique  
 qu'elle n'oserait éprouver . . . *N.H.* II 85  
 rude *See rêche*  
 sentir *See poser, serrer*  
 serrer . . . je sentis . . . mon corps serré dans tes bras? *N.H.*  
 II 56  
 toucher . . . toutes les parties de moi-même se rassemblèrent sous  
 ce toucher délicieux . . . *N.H.* II 56

## 5. GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

## A. Composite Impressions

- concours de tous ces objets . . . le concours de tous ces objets porte aux sens une impression de fraîcheur qui semble pénétrer jusqu'à l'âme. *Em.* II 139
- tout concourt à produire une impression . . . tout dans ces délicieux concerts concourt à produire une impression . . . dont je doute qu'aucun cœur d'homme soit à l'abri. *Conf.* VIII 223
- ensemble de tout cela . . . je quittai ces menues observations pour me livrer à l'impression . . . plus touchante, que faisait sur moi l'ensemble de tout cela . . . *Rév.* IX 332
- impression Supposez les impressions réunies de ce que je viens de vous décrire, . . . *N.H.* II 79
- (douce) Mon imagination, . . . laissait mes sens se livrer aux impressions légères, mais douces, des objets environnants. *Rév.* IX 374
- (légère) . . . ces impressions légères s'effaçaient dans l'uniformité du mouvement continu qui me berçait, . . . *Rév.* IX 362
- (du locale) . . . je dus en grande partie le coloris assez frais [du livre] à la vive impression du local où je l'écrivais . . . *Conf.* VIII 374
- (mélange) . . . il résultait de son aspect un mélange d'impression douce et triste . . . *Rév.* IX 332
- (des objets) . . . dominé par la forte impression des objets . . . je me mis à rêver . . . *Rév.* IX 380
- (de toutes ces sensations) . . . il faut des sentiments qu'il n'a point éprouvés, pour sentir l'impression composée qui résulte à la fois de toutes ces sensations. *Em.* II 139
- moment . . . cette première sensation fut pour moi un moment délicieux . . . *Rév.* IX 333
- sensation (agréable) . . . le concours des plus agréables sensations . . . *N.H.* III 288
- (délicieuse) . . . la sensation délicieuse que j'avais éprouvée en y entrant . . . *N.H.* III 229
- (douce) Il ne faut qu'aimer le plaisir pour se livrer à des sensations si douces . . . *Rév.* IX 375
- situation . . . vous aurez quelque idée de la situation délicieuse où je me trouvais. *N.H.* II 79
- le tout . . . tous les objets particuliers lui échappent; il ne voit et ne sent rien que dans le tout. *Rév.* IX 374

## B. Le je ne sais quoi

- je ne sais quel caractère Les méditations y prennent je ne sais quel caractère grand et sublime . . . je ne sais quelle volupté tranquille . . . *N.H.* II 78

je ne sais quoi de magique . . . le spectacle a je ne sais quoi de magique,  
de surnaturel qui ravit l'esprit et les sens . . . *N.H.* II 80

je ne sais quelle sensation Je ne sais quelle sensation voluptueuse me  
gagnait insensiblement. *N.H.* II 165

mélange inexprimable Tout cela fait aux yeux un mélange inexprimable . . . *N.H.* II 80

ravissements inexprimables Je sens des extases, des ravissements inexprimables, à me fondre, pour ainsi dire, dans le système des êtres, . . . *Rév.* IX 376

sans pouvoir dire de quoi . . . à l'aspect d'un beau paysage, je me sens ému sans pouvoir dire de quoi. *Conf.* IX 72

transports que je ne puis décrire . . . tout cela me jettait dans des transports que je ne puis décrire, . . . *N.H.* III 156

C. Le spectacle de la nature (beauté) . . . la beauté du spectacle de la nature . . . *Em.* II 139

(détailler) . . . un instinct . . . me fit, . . . détailler le spectacle de la nature, que je n'avais guère contemplé jusqu'alors qu'en masse et dans son ensemble. *Rév.* IX 374

(ravissant) . . . il faut pour cela que mes yeux soient frappés du ravissant spectacle de la nature . . . *Conf.* IX 72

#### 6. SPECIFIC PERCEPTIONS, UNRELATED TO ANY PARTICULAR SENSE ORGAN

brûlant . . . noe lèvres brûlantes . . . *N.H.* II 56

brûler . . . si des sables ardents n'ont brûlé ses pieds, . . . *Em.* II 139

feu . . . le feu me montait au visage . . . *N.H.* III 161

frémissement . . . je sentis . . . un doux frémissement . . . *N.H.* II 56  
(d'amour) . . . je sentis un frémissement d'amour que je n'avais jamais éprouvé. *Conf.* VIII 223

las . . . je prolongeai . . . ma promenade, sans m'apercevoir que j'étais las. *Conf.* VIII 120

légèreté . . . sur les hautes montagnes . . . on se sent . . . plus de légèreté dans le corps, . . . *N.H.* II 78

mouvement (continu) . . . l'uniformité du mouvement continu qui me berçait . . . *Rév.* IX 362

(interne) . . . mouvements internes que la rêverie éteignait en moi, . . . *Rév.* IX 362

palpitations . . . les suffocantes palpitations, . . . *Rév.* IX 389

palpiter . . . je t'aperçois, et mon sein palpite . . . *N.H.* II 56

suffocant . . . si la réverbération suffocante des rochers frappés du soleil ne l'oppressa jamais, . . . *Em.* II 139

tourner la tête . . . les lieux escarpés . . . me font tourner la tête . . . *Conf.* VIII 123

- tournolement . . . j'aime beaucoup ce tournolement, pourvu que je sois  
 en sûreté. *Conf.* VIII 123  
 tremblement (convulsif) . . . saisi d'un tremblement convulsif dans  
 tout mon corps, . . . *Conf.* VIII 10  
 (des membres) . . . le tremblement des membres, . . .  
*Rév.* IX 389  
 trembler (genoux) Mes genoux tremblaient sous moi . . . *N.H.*  
 II 69  
 (main) . . . la main me tremble . . . *N.H.* II 56  
 tressaillement A peine se pose-t-elle sur la mienne qu'un tressaillement  
 me saisit . . . *N.H.* II 9  
 vertige . . . je me sentais quelquefois accablé jusqu'au vertige  
 par l'attention, l'odeur, la gêne et l'ennui. *Conf.* VIII  
 133-134  
 . . . je pouvais contempler au fond et gagner des vertiges  
 tout à mon aise, . . . *Conf.* VIII 123



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